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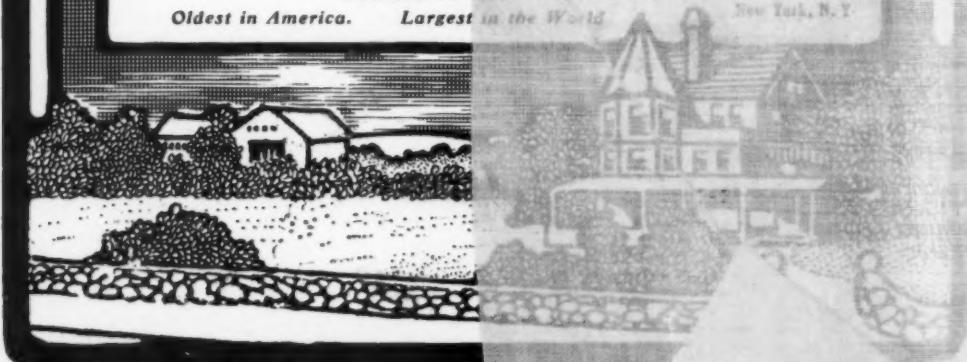
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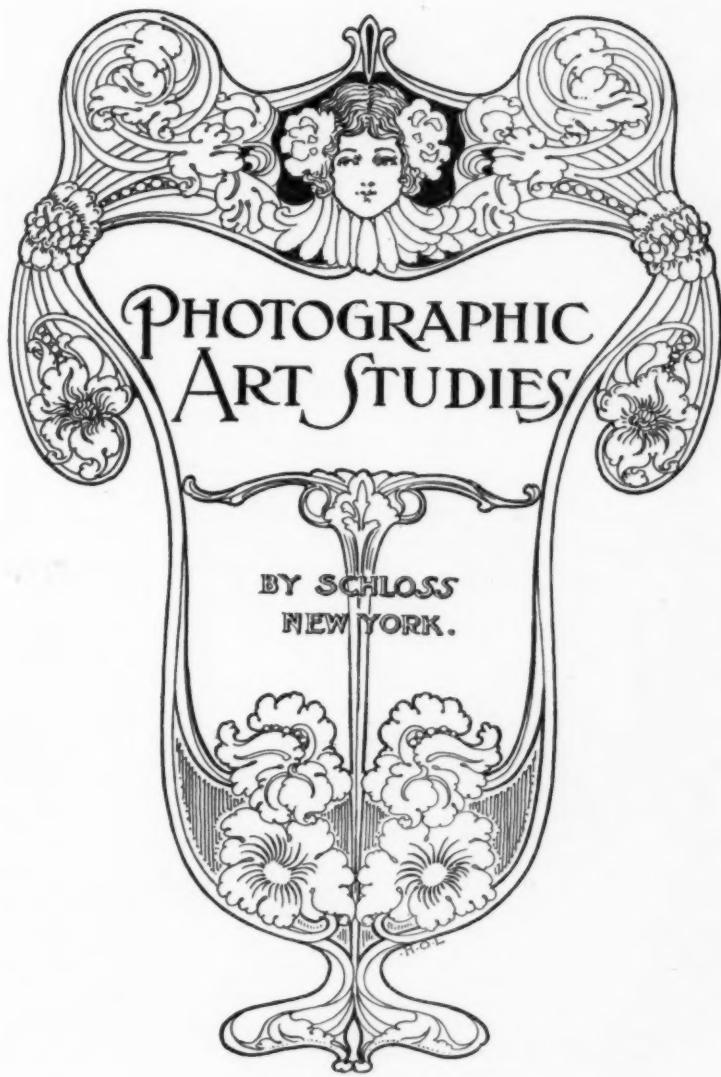
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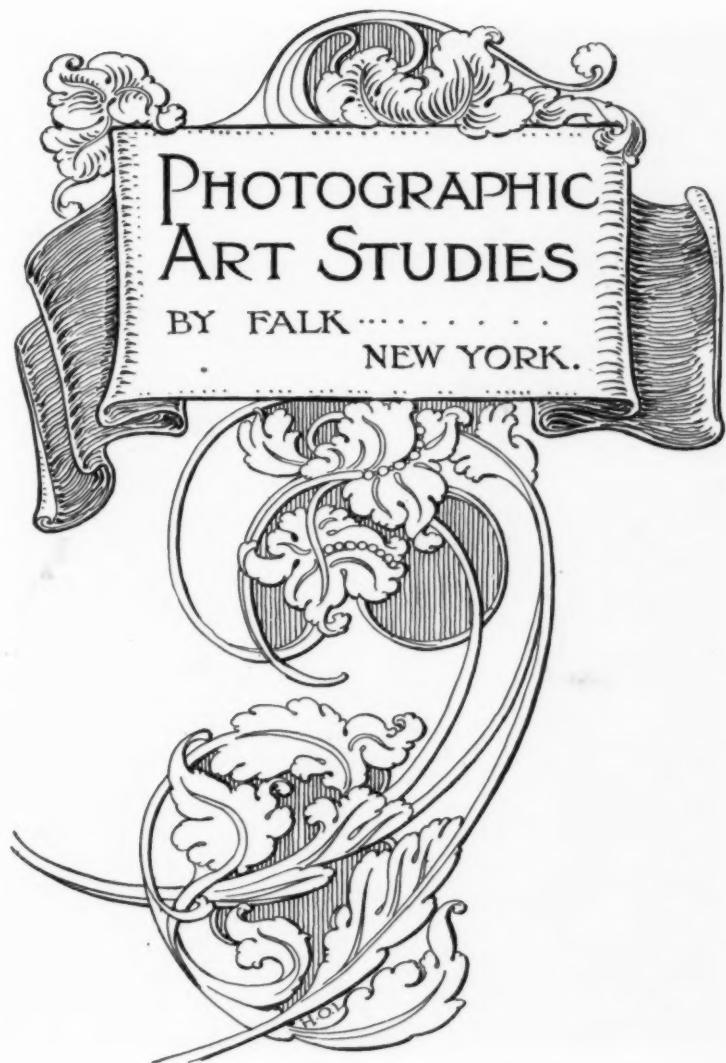
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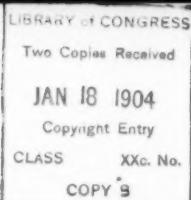
MISS MABELLE GILMAN



DRAWN BY VICTOR R. LAMBDIN

"She was taken before an individual who seemed to be a personage of importance."

"A Reversion of Type;" see page 376



# THE RED BOOK

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## *A Reversion of Type*

BY M. J. REYNOLDS

The old tub *Algeria* was plunging through the waves of the Mediterranean one winter night not long ago. The air was thick with fog, the sea running in short, choppy waves, and the gait of the *Algeria* was something like that of a sixteen-year-old farmer boy, in cowhide boots, learning how to waltz.

A young American woman, with her hands in the pockets of her straight, loose blue coat, and her soft blue felt Alpine hat pulled well down over her ears, stood to one side by herself. How it should happen that a young American woman should be aboard the old *Algeria* traveling alone from Algiers to Canea, herself the only first-class passenger, and a mob of Arabs, Turks and Greeks in the second and third-class quarters, no one but a young American woman could tell; and there is no class of feminine created beings better able to keep its own counsel.

As a matter of fact, the young American in question, in one of her rare moments of self doubt, was internally debating as to whether she had done well to come. The

trip, though short, had been so unpleasant as to weather, conveniences and company, that it almost balanced the interest which she could ordinarily derive from watching so motley a collection of semi-Orientals as that aboard.

"If Hester Bainbridge should not be in Canea to meet me," she speculated dubiously, "it might be difficult and unpleasant to find her. Heaven only knows where she is buried in the interior. I suppose she has discovered Jupiter's bow and arrows by now. I understand he passed his youth hunting in these mountains where she is digging, before he started into the business of ruling Olympus and managing Juno."

Her classic meditations were cut short by a shock so severe that it knocked her down and bumped her head hard enough to deprive her, temporarily, of the power of motion, although she was still able to take cognizance, stupidly, of what was going on. A scene of indescribable uproar immediately prevailed. Up from below poured a raft of baggy-trousered Turks, long-mantled Arabs, and red-sashed Greeks, veiled women

with their veils sadly disarranged, and brown, naked children, every mother's son of them shrieking aloud in his own tongue and calling upon various gods, ancient and modern. Officers ran hither and thither, striving to control the surging multitude. The captain, a big, black Neapolitan, bawled ineffectual orders in a mixture of tongues. Everything was in a fury of motion except the ship which, like grandfather's clock, had stopped short never to go again. No wonder. A rock as big as a house had poked its nose through her bottom.

Into this scene of polyglot uproar came leaping a young man in a dishabille of knit underwear, tasty and becoming, though not conventional. The girl on the deck recognized him as the first engineer, whom she had noted, sedatelyclothed in immaculate white duck, taking his hour off duty in the air. She dreamily reflected that the sleeveless, short-legged and décolleté style of his present garb made him look like some fine ancient statue come to life. She knew a good deal about ancient statuary, so that the simile occurred to her naturally.

It was this first engineer who brought order out of chaos. Some how or other, after he came on deck the life boats got lowered and manned, and then the statuesque engineer stood over them with an axe in his hand, and kept back such masculine canaille as desired to swarm into them to the exclusion of the women and children. But the most difficult thing of all was to get the woman and children themselves into the boats; and seeing the confusion and disorder that prevailed and the difficulty of the engineer to control everything at once, the American girl staggered to her feet and went to his assistance. She

could offer for his aid only a cool and collected head and a quick intelligence. But these were of some value in that crazy mob of primitive femininity, and between them they accomplished the transfer. As the last Turkish woman went yelping over the side he turned to her.

"Now you," he said.

"No," she demurred, "I don't want to go yet."

"Don't be a fool," he said, and clasped her with strenuous clutch to swing her overboard.

She looked into his face and spoke in Italian. "Let me stay with you," she said; "I don't want to go till you go."

His iron grasp loosened on her shoulder.

"But I shall be the last of all," he muttered, distressfully.

"I want to stay by you," she insisted; "I don't want to go with these *maiali*."

His hand of steel became a caress. "Stay then," he said; "we will go together."

They went together in the last boat, landing upon the southwest corner of the island of Candia, the which is ancient Crete, in a blinding storm and amid a soaked and miserable mass of West Asiatic, North African and South European humanity.

In the hour of sudden peril the master mind rules. So, in the shipwreck of the *Algeria* it was not the captain but the first engineer who organized the rescue camp. It was he who had brought off lanterns, by whose glimmering light he found a ledge of overhanging rocks under which the women and children could be out of the pelting storm. It was he who, in the first gray light of dawn, drove the crews back to the wreck, whence they transferred tents,

arms and food, bedding and clothes; leaving the men behind under strict injunctions to collect every morsel of driftwood on the coast. It was he who, returning, gave out the supplies and placed a guard over the food, arms and stimulants.

And then to him suddenly appeared the American girl, as he was busily yelling at a group of sailors struggling with a refractory tent, with some masculine apparel hung over her shoulder and a tin bucket of steaming coffee in her hand.

"Come," she said gently, touching his hand.

"*Figli di cani, a chi t'ha morto,*" he responded, yelling these dreadful Italian imprecations with unction at the men.

"Don't swear any more just now," she insisted softly; "you won't have any swear words left. Come and get off those wet clothes and drink some coffee. You will drop dead if you don't stop."

His face was drawn and haggard with fatigue. Somewhere during the mêlée he had managed to raise a pair of trousers belonging to some other man, but the knit shirt in which he had passed the strenuous night was slit ribbonwise. His flesh was torn and bruised and the blood trickled down his bare legs and arms. He looked down at her with tired, blood-shot eyes. She took his hand and led him to a vacant corner among the rocks, where a little spring bubbled up on the sand. First, she made him drink the coffee, strong, black and laced with brandy. Then she gave him the clothes and a towel and pointed to the spring.

"Take off those wet things," she said.

"There's not much left to take off," he replied, looking down ruefully.

"I am going to get more coffee,"



"A young American woman stood to one side by herself."

she said. "Clean off in the spring. Give yourself a good hard rub-down, and put on those clothes. I have dried them at the fire. Then I will come back and we will have breakfast." He obeyed her like a child, and when she returned she fed him with Chicago corned beef out of a tin can, and English biscuit out of a tin box, with more coffee to wash it down. The sun crept comfortingly round a corner of the rock, and he laid his head in her lap and slept like a child on its mother's bosom.

And Josephine Lawrence, sometime new woman, Bachelor of Arts of Jones College in the United States, looked down upon him and reflected that it was strange that it did not seem more strange for her to be sitting on the corner of ancient Crete holding the black, curly head of a Sicilian first engineer in her lap. Then she leaned her own tired head against the rock behind her, and slept also.

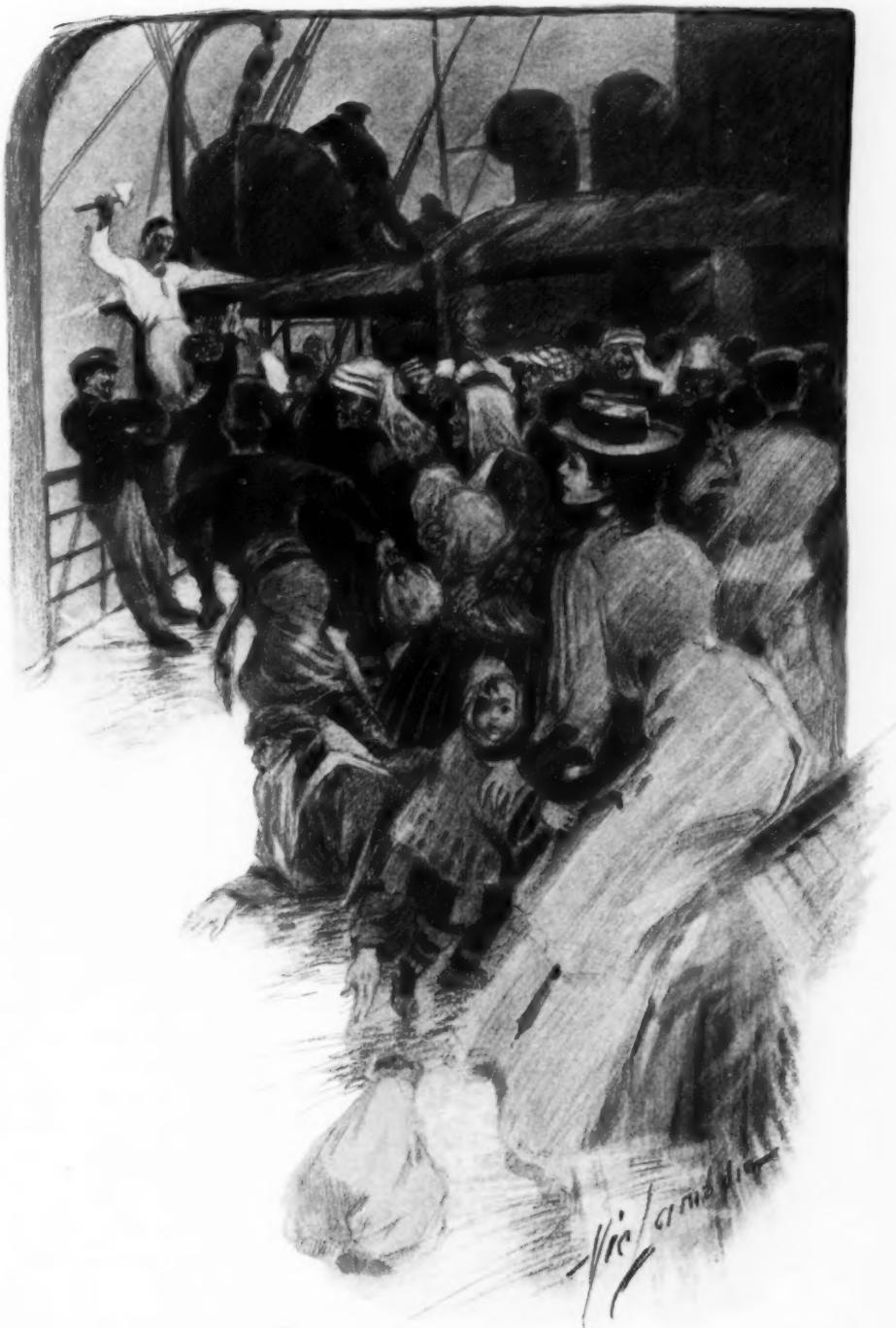
It was really a tiny, rocky islet off the southwest extremity of Candia upon which they had been wrecked, and the fact that it was separated from the mainland by a bit of water which could be crossed without boats at only one point, was the only thing that saved them from the brigands. Candia, which is independent under a Grecian protectate, is about as well governed as might be expected, and abounds most picturesquely in brigands. These gentry, clad in tall boots, baggy Turkish trousers, red fez, Zouave jackets and gorgeous red sashes, stuck full of knives and guns, appeared over the ledge of rocks on the mainland about mid-day. The engineer, whose name was Salvatore Verrano, was about by this time, stiff as to the joints, but fluent of tongue as ever. Josephine thought that his one-sided conversa-

tion with the men might be taken for a study in strange oaths. He slipped with practiced ease from Italian into Sicilian, Neapolitan, Sardinian and Genovese dialects, and from these into Spanish and Arabic, polishing it all off with choice epithets in Greek and Turkish, and strange and uncouth slang of the North African coast. Though Josephine did not understand them all, she knew he was swearing all the time, and the thought crossed her mind that when she got home she would write a monograph on "The Oaths of the Mediterranean."

Probably no man who could not have sworn in so many different languages could have controlled that motley gang on the corner of Candia as long as he did. He organized the defence against the brigands, instituted an armed patrol and kept the gentlemen of the turf in hiding behind their rocks all day. Occasionally during the day he sent or brought orders to Josephine, having taken her for his squire of dames to keep order in the women's quarters; and once he came to her, spent and empty, to be fed. She had a feeling that they two were the only civilized beings in a throng of half castes.

It was this feeling, strong within her, that impelled her to go with him that night, when he came to her at the spring, where he had whispered her, an hour before, to meet him.

"It's all up," he said, speaking in the Italian equivalent for American vernacular. "I've overheard the Turks in the outfit planning to go in with the brigands and divide the plunder. The ship is stuck fast and they can rifle her at their leisure and take to the hills. They've managed to get a messenger over to the mainland to make the deal, and the thieves will be in possession by morn-



"It was the first engineer who brought order out of chaos."

ing. I might organize a resistance, but what's the good? I couldn't depend on any of the cattle, and I don't care what they take, anyway. It isn't really my funeral; it's the captain's. The women and children in the crowd are all with their own men. You and I will cut the whole business and make for Canea overland. I think I know about where it ought to be. It will be better for you than to stay here after these hogs take charge."

And so Miss Josephine Lawrence, B. A., found herself in a little boat, pulling softly away in the dark, small hours, by a roundabout route to the mainland, alone with a Sicilian first engineer; both his money and hers tucked safely away in the bosom of her blue serge gown, and a bag of biscuit and dry coffee in her hand.

"*Razza di cani, maladetta,*" said the engineer cheerfully, apostrophizing the deserted conspirators; "*schifosi, cascittini e sbirri,*" joyously, "*behinu, fetienti, zubbo,*" and he shook a gleeful fist at the receding islet.

"We've fooled you this trip. You were the prize in that ratty outfit, Miss America, did you know that? It was you they wanted to catch and hold for ransom. I heard them planning it. But not this time, *nati di cani*; not this time."

They landed amid rocks and sand, and made their way amid rocks and sand till morning, striving to put as great a distance as might be between themselves and the brigands before daylight. At daylight they hid among more rocks and sand; this portion of Candia being mainly composed of these salubrious concomitants. They judged it wise to lie hidden during the day, for fear of evil-minded prowlers; and when camp was made Josephine sank upon

the earth wholly spent. It seemed to her that she could never stir again.

The engineer looked at her remorsefully and hastened to make a tiny fire among the rocks, where he boiled a bit of coffee in a tin pannikin. This he flavored with something out of a black flask in his pocket, and made her drink, and also eat a biscuit dipped in it, although she protested wearily that she could not swallow. And then he made his coat into a pillow for her head, and said: "Sleep there, Miss America. I will stay on guard till you have had your nap out. Don't worry. Imagine you are a child once more, and I am your respected dad. *Poverett'!*"

She was in a trance-like slumber before his voice had ceased. She woke refreshed, and after they had eaten again he slept, and she stayed on guard, and when he woke they talked till it was time to start. Their conversation was held in a funny mixture of Italian, French and English. But after a short experience Josephine begged him to use her native tongue no more. His English, what there was of it, was fluent indeed, and perfectly comprehensible, but quite dreadful in its vocabulary. His profanities, rolled forth in the liquid accents of Italy, had a picturesque quality. Ejaculated short and sharp in plain English, they were shocking.

"You seem to have learned nothing but swear words in English," she said, in wonder and amaze.

"But I must learn to swear in English, so that when I go to New York and your people call me names I will know what to say to them," he explained.

"You are like a sailor's parrot," she said; "they always learn to swear in all languages."

"I can swear in every language in

use on the Mediterranean, I believe," he responded in a tone of modest pride.

"Well, then," she complained, "if you have such a variety you can surely swear in some language I don't understand."

"All right, I will swear in Sicilian dialect; that is always easiest for me," he answered, in the manner of one willing to oblige.

"And you call such names, too," she continued; "I never saw anyone with such a wealth of epithet."

He looked at her with an imp lurking in each black eye.

"I can call just as many nice names as I can bad ones," he said gravely. And Josephine, to her surprise and disgust, felt her face getting warm.

She had seen fit to withdraw herself within a certain atmosphere of dignity, friendly, but distant. The sailor responded instantly. His perceptions were so delicate as to be almost intuitions, and Josephine marveled, for he did not look like a psychic being. A creature of more obvious and concentrated masculinity never existed, she reflected, as she watched his careless bulk stretched along the sand; his huge shoulders, his great chest, his skin burned almost black by the sun, his leonine head, his dancing black eyes lit by a gleam of irresponsible deviltry.

They talked of other



"He was over the rocks and out of sight in an instant."

See page 376

things besides bad language, and Josephine was surprised to find that the engineer knew books. And she was further bewildered by his attitude toward them. He seemed to class them all as guide-books; useful to save time and explain what is not understood, but no more the real thing than the guide-book is the castle. Josephine had been raised among men of books. And curiously enough, while among those men of books she had been an associate and equal, she found herself feeling curiously young and childish before this Man of Things, and amicably accepting and obeying his orders. She marveled afresh at this. She! Josephine! Who had never been known to do as she was told.

And so they made their way slowly towards Canea, traveling by night and lying low by day, proceeding slowly and wearily through a mountainous and apparently uninhabited country.

It was on the second forenoon out that Josephine let them get caught by the brigands. She had had her nap first; but, worn out by the accumulated fatigue of the journey, she had dozed on guard, sitting straight up against a rock. She opened her eyes on a group of seedy-looking rascals creeping upon her. She had time to emit just one piercing scream before a hand was clapped over her mouth. But that scream was enough to wake Verrano. He leaped to his feet and with a spring like a panther eluded the hands outstretched to grasp him and was over the rocks and out of sight in an instant. Not a word, not a look did he give her; simply disappeared, as if swallowed up by the earth. The highwaymen beat about among the rocks for a time, but finding no trace of him, prepared to march in a very bad humor.

It was a horrible day for the captive. First a hot and toilsome journey of hours on foot, up and down wild mountain trails, with men who paid no attention to her pleas for rest. Finally a footsore stumble up the stony bed of a creek, to the head of a ravine, dominated by a frowning old rookery of a castle. At a signal rope ladders were let down the face of the cliff, and Josephine, more dead than alive, finally found herself within the walls.

It was a mere shell of a place, some feudal stronghold, long since abandoned, not important enough to be preserved as an antiquity, and so preempted under squatter sovereignty by the brigands. It was a detachment of the same band that had robbed the ship, she knew, for she recognized one man who had been on board, evidently enlisted on the islet. The castle, she judged, was one of their strongholds, perhaps the principal one, for she was taken before an individual who seemed to be a personage of importance and she thought he might be the chief. They consumed much time and violent effort in endeavoring to hold communication with her, but she could not understand a word. They seemed to speak a kind of Greek patois. She tried them in English, French, Italian and German, and then bewailed the limitations of her linguistic acquirements. They seemed to realize that she was doing her best, and kindly, though regretfully, excused her failings. It was all very dramatic and picturesque, and not without elements of humor.

Josephine, however, was in no condition to see the comic opera side of it. She was frightened and miserable, and when they took her away to a grim, gaunt old room and locked her in alone, she lay down upon the

heap of straw on the floor and cried consumedly. She was terribly exhausted and anxious, and Verrano's desertion weighed upon her spirits more than she would own. Of course, it was the only wise thing to do. He was helpless against overpowering numbers; he could have done her no good by sharing her captivity. And yet that desertion, without a look, a word—it looked very bad. And race prejudice came to the aid of depression and whispered tauntingly, "An Italian, a Latin; of course you couldn't expect the same from him that you could from an Anglo-Saxon."

She sank from these hateful thoughts into the troubled sleep of exhaustion. From this she was wakened by a sense of somebody in the room. The candle had burned out, and the darkness was complete; but in the cavernous fireplace that yawned at one end she could hear something moving. She started up with an irrepressible cry. Sharp and sibilant she heard the word "*zitta.*" It was the Italian word for "hush," and she hushed. In another moment she heard her name and felt the clasp of Verrano's hand.

"How did you get here?" she gasped in strangled tones.

"Trailed you all day," he whispered. "Shinned up the rocks. Saw you in the council chamber with His Magnificence. Been prowling around this ratty old pile for hours to locate your room.

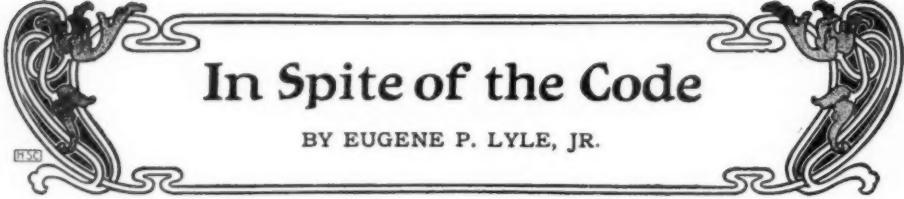
Never mind. Tell you all about it later. You've got to swarm up this fireplace, so hurry. Business first, Miss America."

But for once Miss America was not ready for business first. She said never a word, bat she crept close to him in the darkness; close, close, till her breath touched his cheek. His arm of steel slipped round her waist. Her tired head was pillow'd on his mighty chest. Their lips came together as two drops of water melt into one.

And that was the way Josephine Lawrence, daughter of a college president, sister of a museum curator, herself author of a brochure on "Etruscan Vases," came to bring home a wild man of the Mediterranean out of the heart of ancient Crete. Hester Bainbridge, who was excavating under a special permit from the government down in the valley below, and whose camp they eventually reached, always insisted that he was one of the brigands, and that Josephine simply captured and brought him along. When Josephine's old friends, somewhat scandalized, asked her how she could do it, Josephine used to laugh and say:

"It was a reversion to the primitive woman. Salvatore is the only man I ever saw that I was willing to take for a boss. If we ever get down to hard pan I suppose I shall go out and drag the hand-organ for him."





## In Spite of the Code

BY EUGENE P. LYLE, JR.

An adventure out of the dark and mystery of Paris was what he most desired. During the early evening there had happened a catastrophe of the heart. It was a cruel, underhanded blow, and the young American had not been man of the world enough to parry. And afterwards he could not keep from suffering, simply because he was without serious philosophy. One who has always lived in the sunshine does not carry an umbrella. Therefore, when this young American Tommy Drake strayed under an emotional waterspout he emerged a bedraggled and somehow an inexpressibly pathetic object. However, all young animals possess an instinct for medicine, and instinctively Drake craved excitement just now.

When a man is not a philosopher he would better not think of his troubles. And excitement can keep him from thinking. A hold-up might answer, but Drake did not know where the footpads received. He was not so straightlaced but that drink occurred to him, only next morning would not the old thoughts resurge with splitting agony into his head? He found himself at his club and won some money, which merely made him think of a stupid proverb about lucky at cards. He rode to the Porte Dauphine and back by the Arc de Triomphe, then petulantly dismissed the cab and walked. If something would only happen! He wandered about the Halles, among shadow monsters of carts dumping garden truck into the Paris maw,

and it was like some wierd city of darkness and uncanny thrift, but the half light of dawn came and intensified the vague shadows, as if night were a photographic plate, and the mystery lifted and only the thrift remained, which was sordid.

Drake quit the market by a quiet side street. The first rare citizens of morning were astir, an anomalous race. A concierge was sweeping the steps, a wine seller was opening his shop for the early laborer. These abnormal people made Drake feel like some out-of-the-world being—they had been asleep and he had not. Then it struck him at last that he might go home, and resentfully he turned down the Boulevard St. Germain to his rooms. The world was too prosaic, the hour too virtuous. He would have to associate with himself.

A gathering of cabs and carriages, like so many black beetles against the perspective of gray, is not an ordinary spectacle for a midsummer dawn, even in Paris. But Drake came upon just such an enigma. He was first attracted by the stealthy manoeuvring of a public hack. The fiacre rolled towards him at a brisk gait, but stopped short where the Rue St. Simon ends in the Boulevard St. Germain opposite the Ministry of Public Works. A round Breton face under a silk hat thrust itself out of the window and looked up the Rue St. Simon. Drake looked up also, and perceived a coupé drawn to the curb a block away. The Breton gave an order and the hack executed

a retrograde movement back up the Boulevard and swung out of sight around the next corner into the Rue de Bellechasse.

Drake scarcely hoped for a mystery, but at any rate he would just have a look at the rig that had so

he scowled at Drake as only a good servant can. Drake humbly passed on, wondering if his own coachman was as reproachless. At the next corner his interest bounded higher. Here was another hack, at a standstill, and the fare was on the side-



"Carts dumping garden truck into the Paris maw."

curiously influenced the Breton. There was a stiff coachman on the box who glanced time and again at the baronial door before which he waited. A coat of arms was carved in the oaken panel and duplicated on the coupé! Despite his livery the flunkey on the box was plainly capable of emotions, but for all that

walk peeping around the corner at the coupé. He was thin and wore tan shoes and a silk hat. He, too, scowled at the American's inquisitiveness, but as he was not a coachman Drake had the courage to draw nearer. But at that moment another hack came towards them out of the Rue de Bellechasse. The thin

man seemed to recognize the round Breton face in the window, for he frowned and commanded silence with a raised hand. Evidently his Breton acquaintance was not welcome, but the Breton frowned back and sprang from the cab.

"How did *you* know it was for this morning?" he demanded.

"And how did you, Monsieur?"

"You thought you'd get it exclusive—well!"

"Funeral?" Drake interrupted pleasantly.

"Humph, no danger!"

"Dog fight then?"

"Well, about that serious," the Breton answered.

Just then a carriage hurried by and drew up behind the coupé. Two men jumped out and were at once admitted into the house of the escutcheon.

"The doctor?" inquired the Breton.

"He's already there. More likely the witnesses." The thin man paid out the information like a miser.

Drake was perplexed, but not discouraged. Indeed, hope gave him a glimmer of comprehension. He ran as far as the Boulevard St. Germain to look for a hack, but could find none. Then the coupé passed him, and after the coupé the carriage. They seemed filled with silk tiles. Drake looked up the Boulevard expectantly. He was not disappointed, for just turning the corner were the two public hacks, gauging their pace a block behind the two private rigs. Drake swung in behind the last one, and grasping the back of the hood, trotted along contentedly. It proved a long run, across the Seine, along the Quai de Passy, and into the suburbs. But the bracing air of morning quickly swept his lungs clean, and neither feet nor eyelids were sleep laden. At the top of a

slope, where branches overhung the wall on either side, the cabs halted. The rigs ahead had also stopped and the silk tiles were disappearing through a gateway. Two other carriages had already arrived. When the gate was closed, the Breton and the thin man approached on foot. They were wroth because the wall was high.

"Call up one of the hacks," suggested Drake, who had followed them.

They turned on him and were surprised. "Whom are *you* for?" they asked, but Drake did not know. They called up the hack, though, and he showed them how to hoist themselves from the seat to the top of the wall. Soon there were three of them up there sitting in a row, two silk hats and one soft one, and six legs dangling over the lawn of the Baron of Something or Other's country villa. On the lawn were eight or ten faultless, punctilious gentlemen in attire *officiel*. Two were stripping to the conventional white of linen. They heard the scraping up of toes against the wall outside, and discovered their audience getting into range.

"Ah, *ces messieurs les journalistes!*" and the speaker shrugged his shoulders resignedly, but no one seemed greatly put out. The two newspaper men grinned and lifted their tiles. Drake hugged himself in pure anticipation. But when his gaze rested on one among the actors his breath quickened sharply. His palms caught the wall on either side, and in the impuse he would have leaped down had not the Breton caught his arm.

The two in the snowy white of their shirts held aloof from the decorous intercourse of the others and from each other. Either stood alone, silent, stern, impressive. One was a

tall man whose delicate moustache contrasted uncomfortably with the grim, heavy line of his jaw. The other was short and grizzly, and his beard was blue black. A third detached himself from the ceremonious group and read from a document in solemn dignity.

"Whereas, Monsieur Jarsac considers himself offended in his *amour-propre*, delicacy and honor by Monsieur le Comte de Saint-Remy, etc., etc."

Now, two days previously the Opposition in the Chamber of Deputies had been trying to decide whether the Republic should turn Kingdom or Empire, while the Government sat back and egged them on. M. Jarsac, Bonapartist, in replying to a Royalist, had referred to the Duc d'Orleans by his derisive nickname of Gamelle.

At the word the Count de Saint-Remy was shaking his finger at the man on the tribune. "Monsieur," cried he, "you may consider yourself slapped."

M. Jarsac at that paled under his beard. "And I, Monsieur," he roared, "will not ask so much of your imagination," and hurled an inkwell.

This complicated subsequent negotiations. The Count's seconds held that their man had the quality and right of the offended party. They cited the ink on his person. "But who touches, strikes," maintained the other side. "M. Jarsac was struck, verbally, and after that any blow cannot figure at all in the balancing of wounded honor. Therefore, we blot out the ink." Thus they argued through coffee and liqueur and cigars, and all but exchanged cards on their own accounts, when providentially some one happened to remember that the sword was each man's favorite weapon any-

way, so the right of choice made no difference. Thereupon the Jarsac contentions prevailed, as being the more subtle.

The fight proceeded in gentlemanly fashion. Lots were drawn for choice of foils and position. The Count's seconds produced what looked like a potted shrub done up in tissue paper. Within were the swords. They had been bought the day before and their points sealed and signed by the seconds of both sides. Jarsac's seconds now examined them carefully. Then each man was tapped for armor plate. The band on the Royalist's wrist was measured. The tassel hanging from the Imperialist's hilt was tied up.

"Must be to the death," thought Drake, considerably impressed.

The two champions—I use the French term because it is so courteous—the two champions raised their swords to their lips in graceful salute. No one spoke. It was as if they stood around an open grave.

"A louis that it takes two *reprises*," whispered the Breton to his thin confrere.

"*Messieurs*," spoke the second who had been agreed upon for *maitre d'armes*, "*Messieurs, en garde!*"

The sword points lowered.

"*Allez!*"

Stealthily the two blades sought each other and crossed near the ends, and there for a time they gave caresses. Then the Count thrust viciously for the hand. His point struck the bell, and in the instant he was back at guard.

"Two minutes," announced one of the seconds.

"*Arretez!*" commanded the *maitre d'armes*.

"Three louis to two," whispered the Breton, but the thin man was no sportsman. The American began to shift fretfully on his perch.

After a short rest followed the second *reprise*, in which both combatants tried for each other's wrist or hand. Then, unexpectedly, the *maitre* struck up their swords. At once either man was held back by an opposing second, while the other two consulted with the surgeons, who examined M. Jarsac. Finally they discovered a scratch and leaned over it, like coin collectors with a doubtful specimen.

"No, the blood has not come," they decided. So for a third round the principals jabbed at one another apologetically, after which the seconds conferred again.

"Both have fought bravely," they agreed. "One has shown that he can defend his honor, the other that he can give satisfaction. It is the moment for reconciliation."

But the champions glanced towards the journalists and shook their heads. "This affair, gentlemen, is serious," announced M. Jarsac, and so they fought some more with the same gentlemanly furore.

"*Touché!*" Jarsac growled sharply. It was a ridge of skin peeled off his forearm, whereat the champions shook hands and invited each other to breakfast in the Bois restaurant.

The warriors were hastening on their cravats when an eager visage under a soft hat appeared among them. He looked from one to another, like an embarrassed boy appealing for help. But though astonished, the dueling party was severely cold.

"I—I'm not up on the rules," the intruder began with a certain resolute awkwardness, "but I'd like mighty well to fight one of you here, if—if it could be arranged."

Several smiled. Others looked aggrieved. The Baron came forward. "Evidently Monsieur is a

stranger, a foreigner," he began, very polite but firm. "Ah, so, then I permit myself to have him observe that he is trespassing."

"Oh, that's all right. Since you are pulling off fights here, why not—?"

"But Monsieur, this—*sacre*—this is not the way, nor the time!"

"Show me the way then," Drake retorted doggedly. After the manner of his countrymen, he considered the present as the only time for a fight. "Please give me one of those swords, and tell your Count Remy to step out here."

At the name all turned inquiringly on the nobleman. His mouth had tightened to a cruel line under the fine moustache. Indeed, so there was an *affaire* here! The animosity of M. de Saint-Remy earned for the intruder a standing among them. Jarsac's surgeon, a busy, bald-headed little man, undertook the role of mentor, solely to preserve unruffled the etiquette of honor.

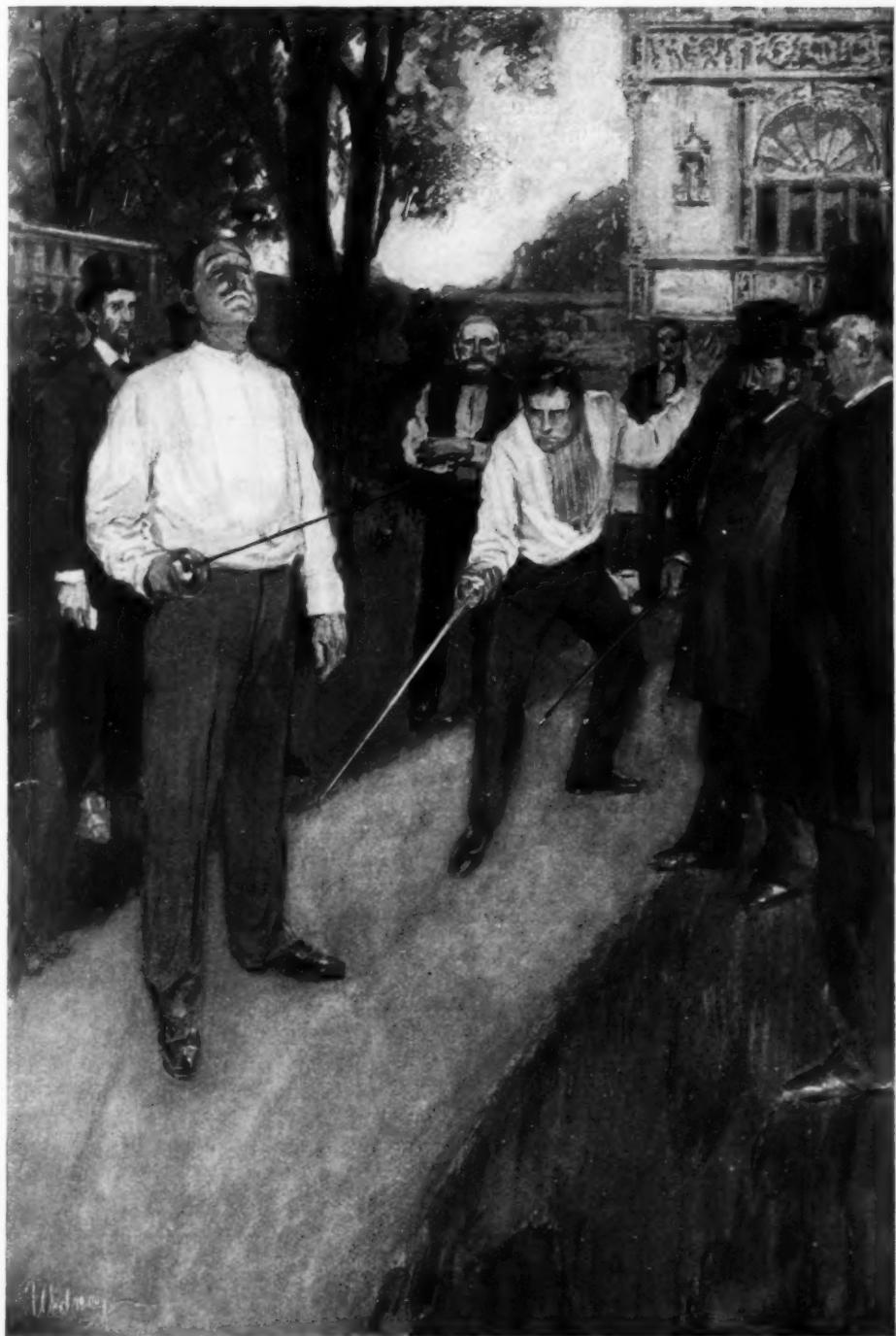
"Have you named your seconds?" he asked.

"Seconds?" repeated Drake. "They only spoil the game. Oh, all right, you be one, and hurry him out here."

"Who else might act for you?"

"I could very well act for myself. But never mind, where's that cherub-face newspaper man who exaggerated this thing into a dog-fight—I want him."

During the duel the journalists had preserved an Anglo-Saxon phlegm, as quite the thing in their profession, but the promise of events not artificial had made them forget their pose. They, too, were on the Baron's lawn. The Breton now accepted the call rapturously. He, by the way, represented the Paris *Sport*.



"'I understood he knew how to fence,' he said reproachfully to his seconds."

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"Now then, bring him out," Drake fairly implored.

"Monsieur, Monsieur, I pray you," begged the doctor soothingly. "First—please let me think—first it is to be presumed that you have been offended by M. le Comte in your *amour-propre* or—"

"That's too much psychology. I only know that it was a blackguard trick."

"And that was—pardon me, but as your seconds we should know, if it's not indiscreet, why you want to fight?"

Drake, though, did not know why. He simply knew that he had been played with and that he just wanted to fight. He had been injured, and that stung. And it hurt, too. And now he chafed before this Count Saint-Remy and his cynical superiority, this grim-willed, polished nobleman who the evening before had so easily flung him back from happiness, as easily as to sneer. That had been the cunning of a man of the world, and fighting could be no remedy. But the boy wanted a field where he might prove an equal.

"Sorry to interrupt," said the Count gently, "but, doctor, I am quite hungry. Are you coming?"

But an *affaire* takes precedence over breakfast, and the doctor was conscientious. "M. le Comte de Saint-Remy," said he, "I shall have the honor of calling upon you during the day in this gentleman's behalf."

"But what is it all about?" asked the Breton.

Drake flushed. "I can't tell you," he replied.

The others heard and saw, and forgot their breakfast. An *affaire* with a secret has more sauce.

"Is it Mlle.—oh, that American heiress?" whispered the Baron in de Saint-Remy's ear.

The Count held up his palm in an

imperturbable gesture for patience, and addressed the party generally. "I think I know this youth's grievance," he said. "It was last evening. He was with Miss—"

A hand closed over his mouth, and five hard finger tips pressed his cheeks.

Excited Frenchmen parted them. "No scandal, no scandal!" they pleaded. One might fight with weapons, but fists were a scandal after the first conventional slap. The matter was henceforth in the hands of the seconds. Not another word must pass between the principals. The Count was the offended party now. During the day his seconds would call on Drake, so the doctor explained.

"But why not right away—I say, Count?"

"There, there!" the doctor tried to soothe him.

"Then you ask him for me."

"But, but, *cher Monsieur*, what you demand is impossible. Only reflect I pray you, an affair of honor in a sack suit—*quelle horreur!*"

"Then I'll just thrash him informally." Moreover, Drake's preferences leaned that way. The punctilious Frenchmen saw that he meant it and were getting embarrassed. They hastened to concede irregularities in order to save the awful disgrace of a fist fight.

"But, Monsieur, can you fence, can you shoot?" the Baron demanded.

"Monsieur," answered the American, "I was fired for fighting, from one of our two national fighting schools. Only they called it hazing."

"But we do not know you, your honorability."

"And Count Remy's? Because he got hit, does he need an introduction? But *he* knows that my creden-

tials for thrashing him are satisfactory. Ask him. Only, you don't get my name."

De Saint-Remy granted the credentials. But he was in a quandary. The hand on his mouth bound him to a meeting. But there was an American heiress to sympathize with her compatriot if wounded. And yet, if the Count let himself get wounded, might she not clap her hands over the duellist's discomfiture. He felt annoyed and resentful. After all, it would be pleasant to scar the young insolent. He consented to an immediate encounter. This put the embarrassed Frenchmen on familiar ground, and they did what was to be done with severe decorum, though they looked heartbroken at the revealing of a blue-bosomed shirt under Drake's business coat.

"Just one question," said the doctor. "We cannot insist on knowing your secret, but we must know if the matter is serious."

"Great Scott! and why else should a man want to fight?"

The doctor said "Thank you," and rejoined the other seconds. "Serious," they repeated, "then we'll make it first blood."

It was in an ugly humor that de Saint-Remy took one of the foils tendered him. They used Jarsac's reserve pair. Jarsac himself, chosen for *maitre d'armes*, gave the commands in the benevolent tone of a kindly bear playing make-believe with a child. All seemed to have an idea that it was to humor the youthful American. Yet they watched him rather uneasily. They could not say how next they might be astounded. And for the matter of that, Drake blithely trod over every sacred convention of the game. And he had a disquieting air of business

about him, too, as he fell into position.

The Count hesitated, then lowered his point.

"I understood that he knew how to fence," he said reproachfully to his seconds. "Would you make me ridiculous?"

"Oh, that's all right," Drake assured him. "Come on."

"But look at his guard," the Count protested. "He might get seriously hurt."

The guard was certainly unusual. With his foil held low to the hip, Drake looked like a Mexican ready to spring. His entire body seemed exposed. It was foreign to the French school and looked too absurd to be even Italian. "Hurry, only a scratch," whispered one of the Count's seconds. "We are late for breakfast." The Count thereupon advanced to cross swords, but he could not, not with that low guard. He betrayed his perplexity. Without the feel of steel, how was he to judge when to attack or parry? It was awkward to lunge, and not know where that other point might be. He had a presentiment that he looked foolish. He tried for a little nip in the shoulder, to have the farce over with. But the other blade caught his own in a tiny circle. He knew now that his friends must be smiling. The Paris *Sport* man glanced around for his confrere to offer a wager, but at once remembered his dignity of second.

"*Arrêtez!*" cried the *maitre d'armes*. He glared at the Count, and some of the others frowned disapproval.

"Oh, there was no intention to really hurt him," said de Saint-Remy. "There, you see, it is but a scratch."

It really was, but they suspected the Count's generosity. The seconds examined the slit under the arm and decided the affair ended.

"But we'd just begun," Drake protested. "Oh, honor nothing! When a man gets the worst of it, he ought to be the more *dissatisfied*."

Jarsac shrugged his shoulders. "After all, it's his right," he said.

"Very well," agreed the Count. "But you will note, gentlemen, that you are consenting to a duel *à outrance*. I call your attention to the vigor of his attacks. In a swordsman familiar with the field of honor we would call those attacks murderous. Do not forget, then, that I am acquitted of responsibility."

Every mien became grave. "Responsibility?" Jarsac muttered. "The scoundrel means assassination."

"Better call yourself satisfied," the Breton whispered to Drake. "The Count is getting mad and it will be sure enough fighting."

"Why, that's what I want!"

"But—but, is there any reason—would—would he want you out of the way?"

"I say," exclaimed Drake, "you are all right."

Then he faced his adversary. This time it was exhilaration of the purest. More naive than the others, he considered that scratch as an insult on his anger. Now, though, it was genuine danger, for which he had a weakness. Best of all, his thoughts were diverted. He felt only vaguely the menace in the cruel, supercilious sneer which goaded him. Jarsac's cane trembled in his hand and would not stay lowered. More than once he knocked up a dangerous thrust on either side, under pretext of a supposed wound. Drake had changed his guard to another equally awkward, the straight arm stiff and level from the shoulder. He used his legs in the cat-like fashion of the Italians, leaping far backwards and parrying in midair. His knowledge of the French tactics helped

him to anticipate his enemy. Some even admired this mixed school.

The Count's long legs and tremendous reach were not long enough. But he fenced along easily, condescendingly. His lunges were marvelous. There was something beautiful in the quick, unexpected flashing of sword, arm and body out of indifferent repose. Yet the point always fell short, just a little, and at last the Count betrayed a frown. But at once a quiet smile touched his lips, and he went on with his play, calmly as before. He even broke ground slightly, and when he replied to a thrust, it was as out of courtesy. Then his left foot began to edge closer and closer up behind the right. His next lunge was gaining thereby inch by inch. He would make up the short span that had lacked hitherto. Drake saw, and pretended not to see. The lunge came. The body fell far forward over the great stride of the right foot. The sword darted straight out, like a shaft of light. Drake's foil dipped under it and up in the *digage*, then in its turn shot forward. For the moment the spectators thought both men run through. But the Count's blade had slid harmlessly against an intervening bar of steel. That bar of steel had passed through the biceps of his arm. The blood pumped horribly under his shirt. The surgeons ran to him. He clenched his jaws, but gave way and groaned with the pain.

When Drake awoke that afternoon, his man handed him a *carte pneumatique*. He ripped open the perforated edges and looked first at the signature. Then he jumped. It was signed "Jessie." Jessie's mother would be pleased if he could call in for dinner. If he could call in for dinner? A moment ago that was



"A radiant French girl in a beautiful gown happens to see you."

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the last of the probabilities. So he read again the little message in blue. If he could call in for dinner!

Jessie's mother, though, showed a certain indifference towards her guest. In fact, she had left Miss Jessie alone to receive him. Miss Jessie seemed happy, and a young woman is adorable that way when she pouts. She may do it to punish a lesser crime, because she is so happy to know that the greater one was not committed at all.

"You could have told me that you didn't even know the creature," she began promptly.

"I did—that is, didn't I? But you wouldn't listen."

"Stupid, you should have made me listen."

He looked humbly into her snapping eyes. He had long since gotten out of the habit of denying things charged against him, so of course he had not made her listen.

"But how do you know now that I don't know her?" he asked.

"She told me, here, in this very room."

"Jessie!" He looked the horror of a fanatic who sees a shrine defiled.

"And moreover," the girl went on brazenly, "there was no woman in the world whose society I could have enjoyed more." She paused to laugh at his bewilderment. "Well, why don't you ask questions?"

"What's the use? You can't keep it anyway. I only know that things must have straightened themselves out some way or you wouldn't be associating with me again. But I say, Jessie, what made her come here?"

"Inquisitive? Well, then, your queenly Leonie wanted to know—she wanted to know——"

"Jessie, *please* talk up."

"—if, if M. de Saint-Remy had been here during the morning."

Drake bounded to his feet in his appreciation of the point. "Oh, oh, oh," he whistled, "she's given it all away. She lets you know that she knows your Count. But how did she come to do it?"

"Because she was—" the girl faltered, "—was jealous. He had failed her at a rendezvous this morning."

"And she concluded that he must be here?"

"Well, yes, and in she flaunted with her tawdry suspicions to claim him. It was very pleasant for me, but it will not happen again. I assured her that the Count had made his last visit here. Then she saw that she had made some dreadful mistake—though what, I don't know—and she looked so wretched that I suggested that perhaps he had been hurt in a duel. We had read that he was to fight one. Fight a duel!" Jessie repeated in fine disdain. Drake kept very silent. "But," she continued, "this regal Leonie only laughed at me for a credulous goose, that I could imagine a duel as dangerous. But all that is of no consequence. What I want to know, Tommy, is why she spoke to *you* last evening."

"Didn't she inquire for me, too, to-day? She might have," Drake added with a grimace.

"No, but I asked her about you. And do you know, Tommy, she didn't even know your name, and I had to designate—the young man whom she addressed in the Café de la Paix last evening. Then, oh then, Tommy, you should have seen her confusion!"

"I should think so. After that, there was nothing left to give away."

"Give what away? Now then, please explain it all."

"But it's such an *old* game, Jessie. First, a Count pays you attention.

You are beautiful, but then, you are rich, too."

"Thank you."

"Well, if you weren't rich, the Count wouldn't have happened, and you will very soon see that I am not running him down."

"But you are running me down."

"I said that you were beautiful."

"Oh, never mind, only go on."

"I—it's awkward."

"Then I'll say it for you. The Count has a rival."

"He thinks he has, though I should not presume——"

"*You* not presume!"

"Well, the rival and you and your mother take our coffee at the Cafe where we can see the pretty girls pass by, but it rains and we go inside."

"And then," Jessie took up the story, the better to frame her questions, "and then a radiant French girl in a beautiful gown emerges from one of those little supper rooms, and as if all by accident she happens to see you and her face lights up in recognition. And *yours* does, too——"

"It didn't. When some one works the smiling rush act on you, your face involuntarily gets itself ready to be amiable. You'll say you're delighted, and all the time try to place the person in your memory."

"That's doubtless the explanation, Tommy. But to continue, when she had acknowledged my presence with a little apologetic bow, her idea of the grand salons, she pounced on you in an airy, proprietary fashion, and took you to task for posing her a rabbit. Now, isn't that slang?"

"Rather, it means to miss a rendezvous."

"And that you should be having appointments with a person who calls them rabbits! Then you"—she grew angry at the thought—"then you said you were sorry, and hoped

she would forgive you, considering the circumstances. Explain—what circumstances?"

"That I did not even know her, of course. I supposed that you understood the game, and would enjoy the irony in what I said."

"A great deal you exact of my sense of humor. But how did *you* recognize the trickery?"

"Well, I had seen her with your Count, and I decided that he had put her up to it. Later, I made sure, after you and your mother had blown away and left me all frozen. I got it from the waiters in the little supper room who had overheard the plot, for the Count, as I supposed, was one of the supper party."

"But the mystery is deeper than ever," said the girl slowly, after an embarrassed pause.

"Why, how?"

"From—you know—from the eternal woman standpoint."

"I see, you mean why she should want to help him to marry you. That's simple enough. A marriage is a civil transaction. She was helping him in a civil transaction, which could make no difference between them, sentimentally. She had in mind, perhaps, a larger establishment for herself. They both needed the money. But the eternal woman broke loose only when she thought he had broken an appointment with her. That was *not* civil, though perhaps, perhaps it was not his fault."

She shuddered slightly and changed the subject. "You make your yarn very flattering for yourself, Tommy," she said.

"How so?"

"Assuming that my choice was centered down to you two."

"It wasn't complimentary, was it? But that's all right now. The Count's eliminated."

"Insolence!"



When Rockingham Symms said good-bye to Gloria Webster at the little red depot away back in Ohio three years before, he was tall, light-haired and smooth-faced. Now he was still tall, still light-haired, but his features were sheltered from the fierce Arizona sun by a swarthy growth of whiskers—the very apparent uncouthness of which was giving him cause for sundry half audible chuckles as he stood peering into the three-cornered bit of looking-glass that adorned one side of his shack.

"What'll she think o' them?" he asked himself, half aloud, as he craned his neck first to one side and then to the other. Buck, his partner, rolled lazily over on his buffalo-hide, yawned and said:

"Huh?"

The query evidently disconcerted Symms, for he started, ran his fingers nervously through his beard and coughed. Buck gazed at him a moment, then sat up and began the difficult task of lacing up a well-worn pair of "chaps" that he abstracted from the inner recesses of the "tumble-down." It was early, real early morning, and Buck knew his partner's reason for this untimely bestirring.

"Goin' to th' station, Rocky?" inquired Buck presently.

"I s'pose so," was the answer, carelessly.

"S'pose so? Well, that's a deuced queer way o' sayin' ye'd break both legs to git thar—shoot me punk ef it ain't."

"Oh—er—well, that's so, Buck—but you asked me so confounded sudden it sort o' rattled me. I'm goin', you bet."

"An' I calkilate that means fer Buck Anders t' pull his freight outen 'ere," continued Buck, tugging to make the cloth meet over his well-developed calf.

"Eh? Pull out? Why?" exclaimed Symms, looking wonderingly at the speaker.

"Why? Oh, jes' sorter because," remarked Buck, looking slowly and suggestively around the single square room, "unless, o' course, ye mought dig a cellar fer me ter sleep in, er suthin' like that."

"No—hang th' luck, Buck, we'll jest build onto this thing—yer looks ain't agin ye an' ef yer agreed we'll jest put an ell on this 'ere shebang first thing in th' mawnin'."

"Exactly—an' I kin sleep in th' c'ral ternight, eh?"

"Jest as you choose, Buck—I reckon th'—th' fam'ly 'll hev——"

"Sure, ol' man—she'll be fagged, too."

"Yes, she will," said Symms.

The two men prepared breakfast and sat down to it, their long legs intertwining on either side of the soap-box which served with equal

facility and dispatch for table, wash-stand, dresser and chair.

It had been three months since Buck Anders had discovered the "Dirty Eagle" and the men were putting in long hours every day at the claim. Already an old apple-can half full of nuggets and a neat sack of dust were safely hidden away in a hollow log close at hand and they were adding daily to the store. In the excitement of the find Symms had for the moment forgotten Gloria Webster. But when old man Prouty threw a letter into the shack door, remembrance came back like a flood—the tiny scented missive drew him back into that distant world whose chief light radiated from a dimpled face set in curls of black.

Symms then penned the most wonderful letter he had ever seen or heard tell of—he even wondered if they would let it go through the mail, but he decided to risk it. Inside its voluminous folds he dwelt long and earnestly on the many good qualities of the "Dirty Eagle"—describing minutely the grand, invigorating climate, and magnificent scenery—mentioned casually the society of Gray Wolf, its refinement and exclusiveness—and wound it all up by begging, praying and supplicating her to make good her promise and come to him at once. He could hardly wait for old man Prouty's next trip to the station, which, by the way, was thirty miles to the south, half of it desert.

The days sped by and a week rolled around—then two weeks—and in the middle of the third week, Prouty tossed in a letter. Buck handed it to Symms without looking at it—he knew he never got any mail and it must be Symms' property. Symms opened it with shaking fingers and scanned it hurriedly—Buck

meanwhile watching him through a cloud of smoke.

"Whoop!" cried Symms, bringing his fist down on the soap-box with such force that it splashed some extra strong soapsuds into his partner's eye. That gentleman promptly dropped his pipe and clapped a red bandanna kerchief to his face, while Symms read calmly on.

"By George!" exclaimed Symms, at length, "she's coming Thursday, th' twenty-second, sure as shootin'! Let's see—when is that?"

"Day arter ter-morrer," mumbled Buck, from behind the handkerchief.

"Gee whizz, this letter must 've been delayed like fury," said Symms, inspecting the envelope narrowly.

"Prouty was sick last week, ye know," remarked Buck, as he arose and looked into the glass.

"That's right, he was," said Symms, as if he hadn't known it all along. And this day was the fateful Thursday.

The two men ate the meal with more or less evidences of anxiety in their manner. The sensation of expectancy that somehow filled Buck, kept him unusually silent, while Symms was wrapped too deeply in thoughts of Gloria Webster to venture much more than an occasional monosyllable.

"I—er—s'pose she kin ride a hoss—sure?" asked Buck, presently.

"Yep—er—that is, I guess so—her folks raises some fancy steppers back east an' I persume she kin ride some."

"Ye'll hev to take Bally along, I reckon."

"What fer?"

"Fer her to ride. Er does she perfer walkin'?"

"Oh, to ride, sure. You bet—say, Buck, I darn near got all balled up there, didn't I? I guess I'd better ride Bally an' let her ride Spot."

"That would be better," commented Buck, as he recalled Bally's white eye—the one that bespoke a nature far from meekness and docility.

Buck arose, picked up his hat and walked out. Presently Symms went to the door and called: "C'rал th' hosses, Buck, while I slick up my puss'nal appearance a bit. I must git a jog on—it's about sun-up."

Symms was neck-deep (figuring from his eyebrows) in the washbasin when Buck came up, leading Bally. The animal had injured his right forefoot in such a manner that he groaned with misery every time he touched it to the ground. Buck pointed at the swollen hoof and said:

"Laid up, pard. W'at'll ye do now?"

"Great Scott! How'd that happen?" yelled Symms, as soon as he got the lather out of his eyes and saw the limping pony.

"Damfino," remarked Buck Anders solemnly.

"That beats th' old scratch's home ranch. I s'pose I'll have to lug that gal thirty miles on th' crupper. No, be darned if I do—I'll jest borry ol' man Briggstone's Maud hoss."

"Ye'll play hob borryin' anything from him—rec'lect that little deal o' mine last fall? Well!"

"I know—but it was you he swore to get even with. He'll let me use 'er all right."

"I hope so," said Buck, gazing sadly at the injured ankle.

"Ye'd better slap on some hot suds an' tie yer ol' shirt around that laig. Bally hain't dead yet a long ways."

Buck then proceeded to administer to the animal's needs, meanwhile adjuring the beast in no uncertain terms. Bally, all patience and long-suffering now, stood pitifully on

three legs and watched with baleful eye while his master rubbed and slapped, pinched and rolled and bandaged the strained joint.

Presently Symms came out to where Spot was tethered, and slightly tightened the girth. Then he threw two water-bottles across the pommel, vaulted into place and with a cheery "So long, Buck," galloped away into the semi-darkness on the trail south.

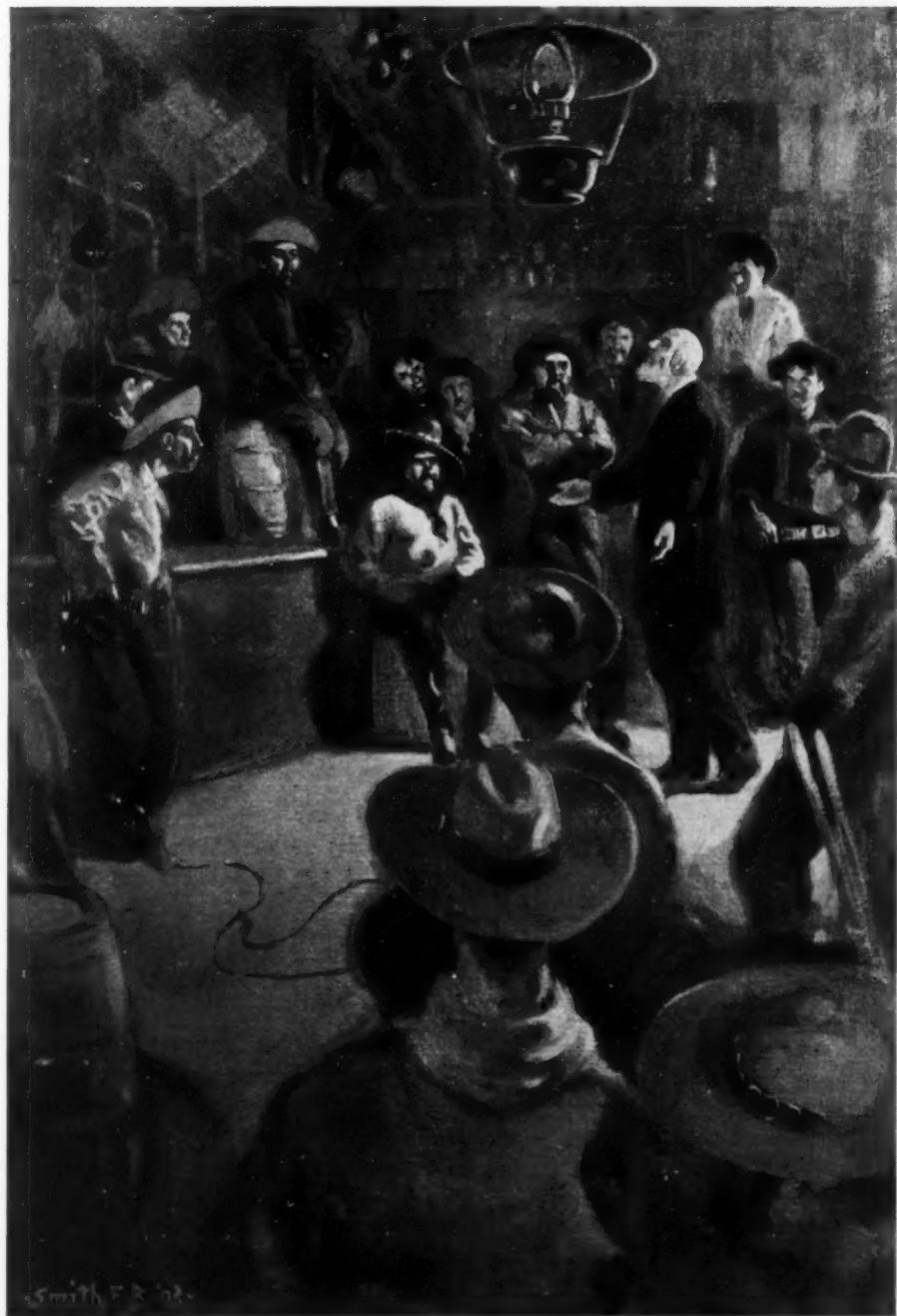
Twelve miles below, he neared the Briggstone ranch. A mile from the place he crossed the little bridge at the southern end of which young Robert Briggstone had endeavored to ambush Symms' partner the summer before, the young man having resented Buck's dancing three times in succession with Lillie Pettingill. Symms laughed as he recalled the scene—the shot which killed Buck's pony—the infuriated Buck as he leaped forward and caught the fellow by the collar—the frightened Bob as he meekly relinquished possession of the glistening Winchester and of sundry sesterces to double the market value of the dead pony—and then the humiliating kick—the full-leg swing that Buck planted against his body to make up for the twelve-mile walk home. Many a time had the partners laughed at the incident despite the fact that old man Briggstone made constant threats of vengeance.

But as Symms rode into the lane that led up to the Briggstone shack he forgot the fiasco and fell to admiring the sleek sides of the pony, Maud, as she ranged along the fence at his side, making eyes at Spot. Symms called, but no answer came. He shouted—still no reply.

"By George, must be off to town," he muttered. A bridle hung on a peg near the corral gate. Symms saw it—then glanced at Maud. Then

THE GRAY WOLF TIE-UP

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"The prisoner pleaded with them for his life." See page 395



"Gloria Webster stepped from the car." See page 398

he glanced at the rising sun—then shouted again.

"Hang th' luck—here goes anyhow!" he said to himself, and dismounting he caught Maud's bridle ear, slipped the bridle on, unbuckled one side of the reins and led her out through the gate.

"I'll meet th' ol' gent an' explain things," he said to himself as he mounted Spot and galloped away with Maud clattering on behind.

Symms rode, but he met no one. The single tall pine that marked the location of the dot on the map called Gray Wolf came into view on

in the direction of Bluefoot's store. A stream of impassioned oratory was issuing from its neighborhood and he paused to listen. Then he walked around to where he could see, and he noticed that the windows were all up and filled with broad shoulders and wide-brimmed hats, while a crowd of ten or a dozen fellows seemed to be trying to force their way into the front door of the place.

"What's up thar?" asked Symms, poking his head in at the window again.

"Huh?"

"What's th' racket 'crost yon-

the southern horizon, followed immediately by the low gray building that stood as the representative of the railway. Then the corner of Gray Wolf's only store kept by one Bluefoot Bill, drifted into view out of the hazy distance.

A half hour later Symms halted at the station and tied the ponies to the railing around the water-tank.

"Train comin'?" he asked of the man inside the bars.

"Thirty minutes," said the man, after a quick glance at the loud-ticking clock. Symms watered the horses and was refilling his water-bottles when his attention was directed to a commotion

der?" repeated Symms, jerking his thumb.

"Jury settin' on a hoss-thief. Says he's a preacher—owns th' hoss an' all that—better go over—sure case, I reckon," said the agent.

"I will," said Symms, as he corked the bottles and set them in the shade.

A moment later he was pushing his way into the store. On a sugar-barrel at the far end of the long counter, sat Cal Putkin, the acknowledged dispenser of legal cult throughout the four counties whose common point was indicated by a white rock just ten feet to the east of the pine tree at the station. Below him Mel Stamm sat on a case of dried herring. Stamm was the sheriff, and by virtue of his office, smoked a pipe, which he partially concealed in his palm from time to time.

Standing in the center of the circle of grim faces was a tall, thin man in seedy black garments. The prisoner, for such he was, looked each man steadily in the eye in turn as he pleaded with them for his life. Not a sign escaped the circle, for horse-stealing was Bulger county's most capital crime, and the seeming patience with which Gray Wolf's citizens listened to the tall stranger's defense, spoke volumes to Symms' keen senses. There was something about the tall man's voice or gesture that caught his eye—he thought he recognized one or the other, but when he looked again he decided he was mistaken. Then he, too, listened.

"Gentlemen," said the prisoner, "I regret deeply the necessity of pleading thus with you for my life. As an innocent man I tell you fearlessly that the horse in question is mine and always has been mine. I do not know this man Briggstone to

whom you refer—don't know anything about his horse you call Maud—don't even know the prosecuting witness. You, gentlemen, do not know me, and my word may weigh lightly with you therefore, but I wish to ask that before you pronounce a sentence upon me, you convict me beyond a reasonable doubt. Bring in the man Briggstone—I'll guarantee his horse is safe and sound at home this minute."

"Jest hol' on a secont, pard," interrupted Putkin, extending his hand, "I want to re-cross-question Bud here afore we dig any deeper into th' merits o' th' case. Bud Sparks, git up."

A short, heavy-set individual rose briskly to his feet, approached the center and stood, hat in hand, awaiting the questions.

"Bud Sparks, you solemnly swear that this man rode this hoss up to your place las' night at twelve o'clock?"

"Hit th' bull's-eye thet time, Cal," answered Sparks.

The judge scowled and looked keenly at the witness.

"Herearter, in addressin' th' court, address it as Mister Putkin," corrected he.

A murmur of applause drifted round the room but was silenced by the next question.

"An' th' hoss is ol' man Briggstone's, you say?"

"Yep, Mister Putkin, I'd know that hoss a mile t'other side o' Chiny. Ain't no more hosses like that in Arizony. He's cabbaged 'er all right," said the witness firmly.

"Yer sure, Sparks?"

"I'll swear to it on grandma's grave," said Sparks, soberly.

"Set down," said the judge. Sparks retired.

The judge emptied his chew into the barrel, coughed slightly, jerked

at his red neckerchief and rose to his feet. Then came a jar that shook the building. The judge's head, owing to his eminent position, had forcibly collided with Bluefoot Bill's ceiling, and Putkin immediately sat down with a dazed look that brought a roar of laughter from the assembly.

"Order!" roared Putkin, as he slapped his hat vigorously against his leg to remove the cobwebs. The crowd gradually became quiet again.

"Boys, we air dealin' with a solemn subjec'-that o' bein' er not bein' a hoss-thief. Thet's th' important question o' th' hour in Gray Wolf, fellers, an' this hyar court ain't goin' to hev no mistakes made ef it knows 'erself. You've got to git ol' man Briggstone in hyar to testify. If his hoss is stole that settles it an' th' guilty man swings. If not—well, d'ye ketch th' argymint, boys?"

The boys signified they "ketched" and the judge was about to proceed when a furious pounding of hoofs was heard and two men dashed up on horseback. A triumphant yell without, raised an air of deep expectancy within.

"Hyar they be!" yelled a raw-boned cowboy, as the newcomers dismounted and shoved their way into the mob at the door.

The judge rose and craned his neck to see. Then his face lit up with a glad smile of recognition.

"H'lo, Briggstone, we're needin' ye bad. Git on th' witness stan'," said he, amid the uproar.

"W'at's th' matter with gittin' th' rope ready, fellers?" yelled a red-whiskered man on the cheesebox, as he took a fresh chew. Putkin was pounding mightily upon the barrel and presently secured comparative order.

"Briggstone, senyer, takes th'

stan', fer th' persecution," he announced.

"Vat's dot? Dake der stan'? I dakes no man's stan'—I vant my hosses—my leedle bony—my Maud. She vas stole mid me—I vant—"

"Whoopie! Whoop! I tol' ye so! Call me a liar, will ye, fellers? Whoop!" and Bud Sparks danced before the astonished Teuton in ecstasy.

"Make dot mans sit down dere. I call no mans liars—my bony vas stole—I—"

Putkin arose cautiously and stamped on the counter.

"Silence in th' court-room!" he yelled.

Back in the crowd was a man with perspiration standing out upon his forehead. His fingers opened and closed nervously and his lips pressed tightly together—it was Rockingham Symms.

"Pris'ner," demanded Putkin, "hev ye anything t' say now?"

The tall thin man who had listened to Briggstone's earnest eloquence with staring eyes and blanched cheek, turned his frightened countenance toward his questioner, then covered it with his bony hands.

"My God! men, I've told the truth, anyway," he said in broken accents. Rockingham Symms' breath was coming in short gasps—he was about to act.

"Boys," said the judge, "I find th' pris'ner hez stole th' hoss an' I sentence him to be—"

"Hold on thar, boys," came a new voice, "I'm going to say my say afore ye pass judgment on this 'ere pris'ner." Symms was elbowing his way to the front viciously.

"W'at you got to say, Rock Symms," inquired Bud Sparks, sneeringly, as he passed him.

"Ye'll know in a holy minute, ye low-down liar, an' I'll settle with

you arter court's adjourned," and Symms turned on the discomfited Sparks with a fury that made that worthy jump.

"I'm an important witness hyar, fellers, an' I don't want no foolin'. Calk'late to hear my testimony, judge?"

"Let 'er go—only cut it short," said the court.

"Wal, first thing, ye've got th' wrong man!"

A shout of boisterous laughter greeted this and Putkin smiled benignly over the crowd as he motioned for silence.

"Next thing, the hoss wa'n't stole!"

"Whee—ee," came a voice in deep disgust from the rear of the room.

"Third place, that ain't th' hoss!"

"Gee whizz! Fetch another rope," said the voice.

"Silence," said Putkin, scowling fiercely at the speaker.

"Last place, if any stealin's been done, I done it myself!"

"Santa Maria!" ejaculated a swarthy fellow at Symms' elbow.

Putkin rapped the barrel head, then slowly stood up.

"Gentlemen," he said, smilingly, "in th' absence o' further testimony th' court finds th' witness guilty o' perjury, false witnessin', aidin' an' abettin' a criminal, not to mention th' fac' o' his confessin' to stealin' hosses. As fer th' pris'ner in this hyar case he shall be hung up by th' neck——"

Symms sprang up on the counter and waved his arm.

"Boys," he roared, "if ye'll bring yer pris'ner an' th' hoss he stole over to th' depot I'll give ye a pint er two in circumstanshul everdince. Come along, preacher—bring th' hemp, fellers—I kin show ye th' *corpus delicti* or swing fer it."

"Court's adjourned pro tem!"

yelled Putkin, as he worked his way out at the side of the sheriff, who kept one hand on the prisoner and one in his hip-pocket.

The crowd scurried across to the station, where the agent was just unfurling the white flag for the incoming train. Out among the bluffs to the east a locomotive whistled, and Rockingham Symms involuntarily quickened his steps.

"Now, boys," he said, as they lined up on the platform, "ye're lookin' fer a surprise, ain't ye? I thought so. Wall, d'ye see anything pecooliar about that gray nag over behind th' tank, yender?"

The crowd turned as of one accord. Sure enough, there was a gray pony standing broadside toward them. She seemed the exact counterpart of the pony hitched to the corner of the station which Bud Sparks had fully "reco'nciled" as the property of old man Briggstone.

"Whar's Briggstone?" yelled the red-whiskered man. The old German, whose beard was bristling at the rough treatment accorded him in Putkin's court, came forward. Symms ran over, untied the pony and led her up. The old man gazed from one beast to the other a moment, then mopped his brow nervously.

"Vell, vell, haf I conundrums, ain't it? Dot vas my Maud—I know dot brindle ear anyv'eres—vare you got dose hoss, Symms, eh?"

"I—er—borrowed 'er," stammered Symms, taken at a disadvantage.

"You vas dake my hosses vidout permission—vat you call heem?"

"You wa'n't thar, you know, an'—" began Symms, awkwardly.

"Yaw, I know dot, I vas avay ven you dake 'er. Boys, vat ve do?"

The roar of the train drowned the answer, but Symms felt that the

sheriff was unnecessarily near him as he strode towards the rear car. Indeed, that gentleman tapped him roughly on the shoulder and said: "I wouldn't Symms."

"Eh?" ejaculated Symms, glancing around. "Oh, don't you worry, Mel Stamm, I'm not runnin' off. I'm looking fer—that she is now, by hokey—out th' way, thar!" cried Symms, as Gloria Webster, her fair face flushed with mingled anxiety and expectation, stepped from the car. The crowd sagged back abashed, and when Symms grasped her in his arms and pressed a kiss on her lips the citizens of Gray Wolf gasped and nearly fell over themselves, widening the distance.

"There, there," said the half-strangled Gloria, "they're all looking—let me go," and she pushed against Symms' broad breast with all her might.

"Oh—er—yes, th' boys, I forgot!" stammered the happy Symms, looking around sheepishly. The sheriff hovered some ten feet in advance of the crowd, and the sight of him brought Symms back to a sense of his surroundings.

"Gloria, I'm a self-confessed hoss-thief jest now. Ye must wait in th' office thar till I inflooence th' jury a little—'twon't take but a secont," and he led the way into the dingy room.

"Boys," he said, as he stepped out and faced them, "it's jest like this: I had to meet that gal hyar today er lose 'er, an' my pard's nag broke 'er laig, so I jest natchelly had to borry Briggstone's hoss. I would 've asked 'im but no one was to home, so I jest took 'er along intendin' to take 'er back an' settle fer th'damages. I ain't posin' as no hoss-thief, never did an' I don't calk'late to be made out one 'thout kickin'."

He paused and the sheriff chewed

silently a moment. Then he stepped forward and clasped Symms' hand.

"I reckon yer right, Symms. They wa'n't no stealin'. But, say, doggone it all, who's she?" with a nod toward the office.

"None o' yer—oh, well, I'll own up, fellers. She's goin' to be Missus Rock Symms jest as soon as—gee whizz, say, whar's that pris'ner? I heard he was a parson—fetch 'im forrid."

The tall, thin man, a smile firmly fixed upon his features, came out.

"Be you a preacher, pard?" asked Symms eagerly.

"Yes, sir—in a land of sinners," was the reply.

"Cut that out—kin ye tie a matrimonial bowknot that won't slip?"

"I have done such things."

Symms dove into the office and dragged forth the blushing Gloria by main strength. He could have hauled out a dozen as easily.

"Parson and witnesses all here—bride an' groom up on their toes—all set, fellers? Let 'er go, parson."

The preacher placed Miss Webster's hand in Symms' big red palm and in a few moments the citizens of Gray Wolf gave three cheers for Mrs. Rockingham Symms. The parson was offered unlimited quantities of strong drink by reason of a slip made during the ceremony, when, hardly recovered from the sense of danger into which he had so recently been engulfed, he asked: "And do you, madam, take this horse-thief as your lawfully," etc.

The remainder of the query had been drowned in a burst of laughter and the shrill shriek of the departing engine, leaving the parson to stammer profuse apologies to the smiling Symms, after which Mrs. Rockingham Symms rode out to the "Dirty Eagle" claim on old man Briggstone's pony Maud.



"Of course," concluded Herford, with a decent show of apology, "I don't talk to everybody this way. Fact is, I don't know how I happened to run on as I have unless its because Nellie and I have been married just eleven months and we were —were saying—that is, we were talking to-day of—"

"Quite so," I assisted. "Mrs. Carruthers and I were celebrating our four-and-seven-twelfths anniversary last week and we were saying the same thing."

"About how happy you were!" said Herford with a note of such bare-faced surprise that I poked the fire.

Kit—my Kit, you know; otherwise and perhaps less favorably known as Mrs. Carruthers—once gave me this valuable rule of conduct: When in doubt, poke the fire. It is a rule which I have often followed with good results and I haven't a doubt that Kit is right when she insists that the way Satan keeps his best citizens out of mischief is by letting them poke the fires. At any rate, while I poked, Herford recovered himself.

"Well," said he, "that just goes to confirm my idea that I've hit on the right way of making married folks happy and keeping 'em happy."

"Eh?" said I, poker in hand.

"Why, what I've been saying to you about my own experience.

Holding the reins and holding 'em snug; putting up a good bluff at being a little bit the lordliest lord of creation that ever walked; pretending to be high and masterful, no matter how quaky you may be inside. Why, my wife thinks I'm a little god—and not so little either, perhaps," with a deprecatory laugh. "And it's perfectly plain, Carruthers, that your wife thinks the same about you."

It seemed an auspicious moment for poking! When I had finished, Herford resumed.

"You see, most men would have made the mistake of being afraid. They'd have said: 'Now, here's a girl who's had the run of the place.'"

"The run?"

I was decidedly in doubt, so sat ready to poke.

"You know what I mean. Been everywhere. Seen everything. Known her way about. I don't suppose there ever was a girl who knew the ropes better than Nellie did."

"The ropes?" I ventured. "What ropes?"

"All of 'em, I guess," declared Herford. "All of 'em that most girls can't touch without getting themselves tied up in double bow-knots. Knew how to check a trunk and how to pay a cabman the right fare and how to get a section in the middle of the car, when another

woman would have been stowed away in an end upper, and how to get good seats at the theater at the last moment instead of standing in line a week beforehand. *You know what I mean?*"

"Yes," said I. "Yes, I know." And under cover of a poke I chuckled as I saw what we were coming at.

"Well, as I was saying," went on Herford with an eager enthusiasm which was very disarming, "most fellows would have been a bit uneasy about a girl like that. Inclined to give her her head a little, you know, even if they didn't let her go her own gait entirely. Don't you think so?"

"Yes," said I, without a single poke of doubt.

"And I'll admit," owned Herford, "that I was tempted to do it myself. Only, I had a sort of instinct that the other way was going to be better and I believe a fellow's pretty safe in trusting to instinct after all. Don't you?"

"Er—yes," said I; "his wife's instinct."

With difficulty Herford pulled himself back from the middle of his story and stared at me with a blank look.

"When it comes to instinct, you know, they bowl us out every time," said I. "It is queer how they do it. Seem just to shut their eyes and let her go. But you can mark up a strike for them so often that you soon find out it isn't your game. What—what happens to be your wife's instinct in this matter?"

Herford changed legs as it were. From right over left to left over right; a significant change to an observer like myself. If you don't believe me, just note how you accompany your own masterful self-satisfaction with the right-over-left

attitude; and how your unassertive, pet-dog sort of man unconsciously drops into the left-over-right position.

"My—wife's, did you say?" asked Herford.

"Yes," I replied, rather wishing I hadn't.

"Why—I suppose—I think—I never thought—"

More than ever I wished I hadn't.

"Look here, Carruthers," said Herford, "you know that I know I'm only a cub at this married life business, but at least I hope I'm not an ass. I mean I'm not so big a donkey as not to want to find out if I'm running the race the wrong way. Am I doing that? Tell me."

I have rarely found myself in a situation more calculated to be improved by attention to poking, but I wavered. There was an eager, ingenuous frankness about Herford which I liked; and—I thought he had held the reins just a bit over-strenuously. Furthermore he had done all the talking since we had taken to my den, dinner being over, and perhaps my tongue was growing a trifle restive. At any rate, I gave the fire only a few half-hearted pokes and then I made up my mind to tell him.

"No," said I, "you're not an ass, Herford, I dare say; but I'm a reformed one. I think I may modestly claim that much. Do you mind if I tell you about it?"

"I don't know that I ought to mind if you don't," said Herford; which was so intelligent, under the circumstances, that I decided I was right to tell him.

"Well," I said, swinging the poker between my knees, "Kit and I refer to it as 'the Great Rebellion,' and it happened when we had been married just one year and a half. I believe that your acquaintance with my wife does not date back so far as

that, so you do not know that in describing the charming Mrs. Herford you have given [a good, though inadequate, portrait of Mrs. Carruthers."

Herford moved uneasily and it suddenly occurred to me that "inadequate" had got in under his collar and was prickling.

"When I say inadequate," I therefore made haste to add, "I mean only as refers to the extent of Mrs. Carruthers' independence before we were married. She always was the dearest girl—but horribly clever about doing things. Seemed to know to an inch just where a car, for instance, was going to stop and was always the first person on. Could cross Broadway at its most ticklish while other women hung fire at the curbstone. Always had the best table in a restaurant and could order a luncheon to match the table. And all—which was the best of it—without fuss or flurry. She certainly was horribly clever, Herford."

That young man fetched a sigh of such sympathy that I interpreted it, and rightly I believe, as a tribute to Mrs. Herford; but I knew that there was no time for dallying, so pressed on.

"Now I think you know, Herford," I said, and complacently twirled the poker, "that if Kit had ever—well, come it over me, you know—I should have veered off while there was yet time."

Herford nodded with the conviction of experience.

"But she didn't. You know the girl who is always at one end of the car, scrambling on by herself, while you are heroically holding back the

mob at the other end and looking wildly about for her to let you grandly pass her up the steps ahead of everybody else. You know her, Herford. Well, that was not my



"Knew just where a car was going to stop."

Kit. She was horribly clever, but she preferred to have me do the being clever when I was about. A noble trait in woman, Herford."

The sound of voices from the region of the drawing-room came

faintly to my ears and reminded me that Herford had consumed a good deal of time before my innings came and that it behooved me to hurry.

"To get at my story," I therefore remarked, "Kit was a dear in spite of her cleverness, and I married her; married her with some fear and trembling, as befits any man who marries a nice girl; but also with the belief that the way to make my little girl think I was the king of beasts was to roar very, very loud on all possible occasions and to do as much lashing and gnashing as I could conveniently manage. She seemed to like being taken care of—" Herford's face lighted up in unmistakable recognition of that symptom—"so I lived up to my opportunities. We came up here to Connecticut and I was so 'careful' of Kit that I scarcely let her go out of the house without me. When she wanted to go to the city for shopping, I had her wait until I could take her down. I—I believe I generally took her by the arm at the approach of a train or even of a street car. I suppose I intended to assure her that I would not allow the locomotive to reach out and grab her as it went by. I was always very firm in all those matters.

"When I took her down to shop, I put her in a cab unless I could go to the shops with her. I *always* accompanied her to the shoe dealers and sat and watched the slim, sickly salesman as if I thought he might bite off Mrs. Carruthers' foot if I relaxed my vigilance for a moment."

At this point I stopped to enjoy a chuckle or two with myself. Then glancing rather shamefacedly at Herford, I noticed that his complexion seemed to have decided on being a pronounced purple. I eyed him for one moment of eloquent eye-confession, then I held out my hand to him.

"Herford," said I, as we solemnly shook, "it is high time that you sat at my feet and learned wisdom. But I begin to think I need not go into details about how I 'took care of' my wife."

"But—but," stammered Herford, "she—*my* wife seemed to like it when I went to the shoeman's with her."

"So did Mrs. Carruthers," I assured him. "Why, for a year and a half that girl snuggled down in my pocket, as it were, as contentedly as a squirrel. At least I never dreamed that she wasn't contented, and she said afterward that she never felt a qualm until—"

"Until you went a trifle too far, eh?" asked Herford, with a rather superior smile.

"No," said I, and my head fairly wobbled with wisdom. "Quite the contrary. It was this way. Kit had been planning to go to the city on a certain Friday and, as usual, I was going to take her down in the morning, stand guard over her at the shoe store, lunch with her, then leave her to finish her shopping while I transacted some small matter of business. Whenever I had anything of importance to attend to I went to the city alone or, if Kit did go with me, I had her lunch with my aunt who lives there.

"Well, the day before this particular Friday I had an imperative summons to Boston; business which threatened to keep me there over Sunday. I remember discussing with myself whether I would better have Mrs. Carruthers postpone her day in New York; but I must have had a glimmer of returning reason, for I finally told her not to change her plans."

"And she didn't?" inquired Herford.

"She didn't," said I, and a side

glance showed me that Herford was perfectly convinced that his Nellie would have done otherwise. I took no notice, however, but proceeded with my tale.

"I gave my wife my Boston address, put her on her train and inside of an hour was aboard my own, bound for Boston. That was Friday morning. Saturday noon I came to a standstill with the business I had gone north on, so caught a train which brought me home here about four o'clock. I've got to cut this thing short," I went on as again I heard the sound of laughter in the drawing-room, "so I'll just say that I found my wife had not returned! No, sir. Well, maybe other men would have thought of more than one explanation, but I did not. I was just one great bulking fear. Or rather, a certainty; for I knew—*knew* she had been run over, or knocked down, or blown up. There was a sort of epidemic just then of sewer explosions which blew off the covers of the manholes, and for some reason—utterly absurd as it was—I was haunted by the spectacle of those things flying thick on Broadway and my wife in the midst of them.

"I had sense enough to pause to assure the servants that my wife had stayed with my aunt in the city, then



"My wife—laughing, talking, having a beautiful time."

I caught the 5:14 for New York. Of course my first move was to go to my aunt, who lives in one of the fifties just west of the Avenue, so I hailed a cab and climbed in. I remember I was so 'trembly' that I couldn't seem to get my foot up on to the step until I'd made two or three tries for it.

"It was just about seven o'clock and there were several carriages at Delmonico's setting down people who were dining there. Herford," said I impressively, for I was about to tell him of the most interesting coincidence which has ever come under my personal observation; one, moreover, which has lost for me none of its glamour from the fact that, owing to the circumstances, I have not been able to confide it to others. "Herford, if you'll believe me, the first person I laid eyes upon in that group——"

"Not your wife!" exclaimed Herford with a really proper degree of interest.

"Yes sir, my wife. *My wife*—in swell clothes which I had never seen! *My wife*—with a young man, also swell, also previously unseen by me! *My wife*—laughing, talking, having a beautiful time!"

I paused and swung the poker reminiscently.

"There were other people with them, but I wasn't conscious of anything but my wife laughing up into that good-looking man's face. Then my cab swung around the corner and I lost sight of them. Well, I was all of a heap for a minute or two. It had been such a violent change from my mental picture—flying man-hole covers, you know—to this actual vision that I couldn't seem to get readjusted. We must have almost reached my aunt's before I came to. Then I furiously poked up the trap and told the driver to hustle back to Delmonico's. It didn't seem to occur to me that my wife was undoubtedly dining there and that I had plenty of time. I sat on the edge of the seat, in a panic lest I had lost track of her. I fairly pounced into the place, told some one I was looking for a party of friends, and from the corridor glared

at every living soul in the restaurant. My wife was not there! I don't know of what further idiocy I should have been capable if I hadn't started blindly down the corridor and run then and there into the arms of my wife and her friends coming from the cloak room."

Herford went so far as to contribute one or two words of feeling as I paused to smile with my thoughts.

"Did you ever hear Mrs. Carruthers squeal with delight?" I asked. But as Herford seemed in doubt—and I had the poker—I did not wait for an answer.

"It really is worth going to New York to hear her," I assured him. "At least it seemed so to me then."

The sound of laughter and of voices had left the drawing-room and I could hear Kit in the hall now, showing the rugs. Time was up.

"You see," I hurriedly explained, "she had simply gone wild over her taste of freedom. She said that when she found herself on the train, alone!—without her keeper, you know—she had a reckless impulse to forget that she had ever even met the conventionalities. I believe she promptly picked out another seat from the one I had put her in. Hankered for a dining-car—there didn't happen to be one—so that she could—oh, I don't know what! just do *something* by herself. Almost looked around for somebody to flirt with. Oh no! oh no, Herford! The young man I saw was not 'somebody.' He was the cousin of one of my wife's old friends. The two girls ran across each other—at the shoeman's I believe. They lunched and shopped together and then the friend took Mrs. Carruthers home with her for the night. The next morning they had another delirious shopping tour and again they

lunched together. They went to the matinee and when I arrived, on my search for the battered remains of my wife, she was dressed up in her friend's togs, chaperoning the girl and her fiancé at Delmonico's and making me an object of envy to the cousin who went along. She had written me at Boston, telling all about it.

"With it all, though," I went on, "I don't think my wife had ever been as glad to see me as she was that night. You see, she hadn't wanted to get rid of me. It wasn't that. She had simply been overfed with me and had lost her appetite. Or, to use your own figure, I had held the reins too snug and the minute she got her head she couldn't help a bit of a bolt."

I am quite sure that if Herford had been provided with the poker and my wife's maxim about its use, he would have poked assiduously. But just then—

"Yes," said Mrs. Carruthers on the other side of the hangings, "isn't that Kazak a dear! And the cheapest thing you ever saw, Mrs. Herford. Mr. Carruthers and I picked it up only last week—and then we spent all the money we thought we had saved on the rug in celebrating the bargain. That's a lovely way to do. Does your husband ever get a day off to go on a real larky shopping tour with you?"

I glanced at Herford.

"Mr. Carruthers can't manage it very often," my wife continued, "but we do have such larks when he can go!"

Herford glanced at me, but I brazenly nodded my head and gave the poker a satisfied wave. Then the hangings were softly pushed aside and my Kit looked in.

"Have you two taken root here?" she demanded.

Herford and I proved our continued detachability by rising and offering our chairs.

"What have you been doing in your secret session?" inquired Mrs. Herford.

"Oh, talking about history and—the lessons to be learned from it for use in studying present social conditions," I pronounced.

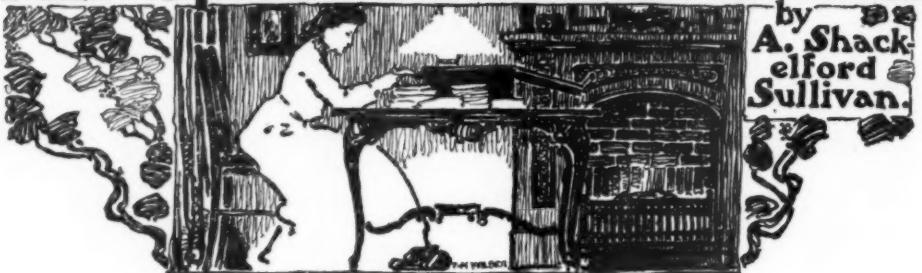
"Oh dear!" exclaimed Kit in distinct commiseration. "How dreadful to be a man and to have to live up to it that way. You poor old fellow!" and she gave me that look of tender, rather awed admiration which is better than meat and drink and my favorite pipe to me. I never get so mumbly—which is Kit's expression for a general low down feeling—that the tonic of that look does not go through me like wine. On this occasion it even enabled me to meet Herford's accusing eye without flinching. And just then Mrs. Carruthers created a diversion.

"History! and lessons! and social conditions!" she sighed. "The names seem familiar, you know, but that's all. Never mind, Mrs. Herford; while our husbands have been toying with the fate of nations we have at least planned a general campaign for the conquest of a spring wardrobe. I'm going to the city Thursday to begin operations. Let's go together and make a day of it. Or would Friday suit you better?"

There was a moment's pause during which I held Herford's eye with a compelling glance. I would have given a good deal for a look at his wife's face, but I did not mean to let him cast any deciding glances. So I held his eye with mine for that brief pause before his Nellie spoke.

"Why—yes," she said, and there was a little, fluttering thrill in her voice; "I think—I could go—Thursday."

# Mrs. Spear's Moonstone Brooch



by  
A. Shackelford Sullivan.

It was early afternoon when Miss Malinda Strong began the examination of the papers of her dead aunt in the search for a will, and at midnight she still sat in front of the slowly dying fire with the big tin box open on the table before her, and its former contents ranged in piles around it.

Nothing had so vividly awakened her to the stupendous fact that her aunt was indeed irrevocably gone and her authority forever passed away, as this bringing forth of the large tin box in which her aunt had kept her private papers. It was impossible not to have a feeling of sacrilege and a dread of punishment as she fitted the key in the lock. Her hands shook so she could hardly hold the first thing she took from the box.

It was a photograph of the dead woman's husband—Josiah Strong. On it was written, in her aunt's fine, neat writing, "to be burned." Next came a bundle of letters marked, "From Josiah, to be burned." Another picture, that of her aunt's only child was inscribed, "Johnny. Born June, 1867. Died June, 1870. Burn this." Then came a small envelope containing two locks of hair, labeled respectively, "Josiah" and "Johnny. Burn these."

It struck Miss Malinda as strange that these relics and mementos of her husband and child should be

wrapped up and securely sealed, as if the bereaved wife and mother had long since put them as far out of sight as was compatible with their non-destruction.

There were a photograph of Miss Malinda's father and two or three faded daguerreotypes of persons unknown to the searcher. Then came a red-taped bundle of deeds—mortgages, insurance policies, leases, title deeds, etc. Every one was subscribed plainly, and Miss Malinda looked in vain among them for a will. Next came a huge bundle of receipts, then a long envelope marked "Notes receivable." Underneath that was a leather-bound book in which investigation showed that Mrs. Spear had recorded in detail all her financial transactions. Miss Malinda was amazed at the largeness of the sums involved. It had never occurred to her that her economical aunt was in receipt of so large an income.

As she laid the volume down and glanced again in the box, her eyes rested upon a pile of bank pass books. She was somewhat surprised at the number of them, and their varying appearance. However, it was like her extremely cautious aunt to have money deposited in several banks instead of entrusting the whole amount to one.

The first book was made out in the name of Eliza Strong—her aunt's

maiden name. The last entry was thirty years back. Next was a pass-book for Eliza Strong Spear, with an up-to-date balance of five thousand dollars. Then came a third pass-book, "Eliza S. Spear in trust for son Johnny." Inside was the date of the child's birth and three deposits, with a total of three hundred dollars. It was like Mrs. Spear never to have drawn out the dead child's funds. When she put money in a bank it stayed there.

So far Miss Malinda had felt surprise only at the extent of her aunt's means. The bank accounts had all been kept with one institution. As she looked at the remaining two pass-books a feeling of profound astonishment and helpless incredulity took possession of her. These books were from a different bank. On one was written in a bold, clerkly hand, "Mrs. Eliza S. Spear in trust for daughter Angelica." Inside it stated, "Born 1879." The accounts showed deposits for seventeen years, the last one credited only six months previous. Never one returned check. Balance nine thousand dollars.

"Daughter Angelica!"—why her aunt never had a daughter. "Born 1879." Then the child would now be nineteen years old. It was incredible. On the other pass-book was written in the same hand, "Mrs. Eliza S. Spear in trust for son Reginald." The entry inside was "Born 1882." There were fifteen entries without a single debit. Balance six thousand dollars. What in the world could all this mean? For fifteen years she had been living alone in daily—yes, hourly—companionship with her aunt, and yet she had never suspected the existence of these children. Yet her aunt had been saving for them and piling up money in bank for them. Her aunt's husband, Uncle Josiah, had

been dead over twenty years. Whose children, then, were these? It must be that her rigidly virtuous aunt had made a secret marriage—but to whom? When? Where?

It was in this tumult of emotion that Mr. Griscom, her aunt's lawyer, found her when he called in the morning on his way to business.

"You have not found a will?" he queried as he seated himself opposite her. "No? Well, I did not expect it. Mrs. Spear would have called me in to draw it up."

"Mr. Griscom," said Miss Malinda slowly, "for how long had you known my aunt?"

"About thirty years. Why?"

"Can you tell me, then, what this means?" passing him the pile of bank books.

"O these are all right," running them through his hands. "'Eliza Strong,' her maiden name, you know. 'Eliza Strong Spear,' another account opened after marriage. 'Eliza S. Spear in trust for son Johnny.' Poor Mrs. Spear! That child's death was an awful blow to her. 'Eliza S. Spear in trust for daughter Angelica.' Why! what?—there must be some mistake here. Sister? cousin? niece? But you were her only relative."

Miss Malinda pointed to the remaining pass-book.

"'Eliza S. Spear,'" he read aloud, "'in trust for son Reginald. Born 1882.' Sixteen years ago! Incredible. Why her husband died—let me see, in 18—why it's fully twenty years since Josiah Spear died."

"Then whose children are these?" queried Miss Malinda.

"There must have been a secret marriage," answered the lawyer. "But Mrs. Spear! Of all women in the world, Mrs. Spear to be secretly married! 'Born 1882.' Why that

was after you came here to live, Miss Malinda."

"No. Just before. I came here in May, 1883."

"Here are thousands of dollars awaiting a claimant. Of course in view of this state of things, she would never have called upon me to draw up her will. The existence of children would alter everything. They would be the legal heirs. Still, I think she would certainly have made provision for you. You would better continue your search for a will. In the meantime, I think I will see Doctor Slocum. He was Mrs. Spear's physician."

Two hours later Mr. Griscom and Dr. Slocum sat in the lawyer's office, and the bank pass-books lay on the table between them.

"Did you ever have any suspicion, Doctor," asked Mr. Griscom, "that Mrs. Spear was slightly mentally unbalanced—just 'a little off' you know?"

"No-o. Not to speak of."

"Well, now is the time to speak of it if you had. A good deal depends upon it just now."

"Yes. Yes, that's so. Well, she had dreams, you know."

"Dreams!" contemptuously ejaculated the lawyer, "who in heaven's name, in these days, except fools and fortune tellers, pays any attention to dreams?"

"That is exactly what I said to Mrs. Spear."

"What kind of dreams did she have?" queried the lawyer with the tone and air of a thoroughly disgusted person bent on maintaining self-control.

"She complained of such a vivid remembrance of persons, places, and events which she could not locate, that it confused and bewildered her in regard to her own identity and that of those about her."

"Then I think she must just have imagined these children—imagined them, you know, and a lot of other things. Why she simply couldn't have borne them. She lived here all the time. Right here with people all around her. I've seen her myself nearly every day for thirty years."

"Haven't you been away from here in all these thirty years?" queried the doctor, eyeing the lawyer curiously.

"Why—yes. Twenty years or so ago I went over to Europe for about a year, and along in 1882 I went over to California for seven or eight months. With those exceptions I've just kept up a steady grind."

"Exactly. Well, you notice the times assigned as the birth dates of Mrs. Spear's children are just the times when you were not in a position to know anything about her."

"But other people did. Take yourself for instance. Didn't you pass her house every day and see her nearly as often?"

"Yes. The trouble is I came to live in this town in 1883, and the boy Reginald—the youngest child—is stated to have been born in 1882. As a matter of fact, I do know that Mrs. Spear was away from here in 1882 and came back in March, 1883. My wife and I happened to be passing the house one bleak morning and saw her, her widow's veil blowing out in the cold wind, sitting on the snow-covered steps. She looked so ill that though she was a stranger to us, we helped her into the house. I made a fire and my wife fixed her up some hot food and drink. A few days after she called me in professionally."

"Did she say where she had been?"

"No, except that she had walked a long distance. Walking was not easy for her. You remember she

limped a little. It was caused by a slight malformation of the left ankle. I learned from the neighbors that she told nobody of her intention to go away. She simply locked up her house, bought a railroad ticket, and was gone a year. It was nobody's business. I learned also from her neighbors that she had done the same thing some years before. I advised her to have some one come and live with her, and finally she yielded and sent for her niece, Miss Malinda."

wife to let her come to herself gradually."

"I cannot credit anything about those children," broke out the lawyer. "I believe she was insane—don't you?"

"No. She wasn't insane. She might have been the victim of an hallucination."

"I don't see any difference myself. Anyway, I am going to call upon the banks to pay that money over to Miss Malinda. She has been appointed administratrix. If they



"Sitting on the snow-covered steps."

"According to the date given on that pass-book, that return journey must have been taken soon after the birth of that boy. Did she speak of him?"

"Now that you remind me of it, I do recall that she asked for her husband and baby. My wife showed her their pictures, but Mrs. Spear seemed bewildered, and to have forgotten they were dead. She acted so confused that my wife spoke to me about it. I attributed it to her fatigue and weakness and told my

refuse—which they probably will—we'll sue them. Then they'll have to hand it over."

Everything developed as the lawyer expected. The banks holding deposits for the daughter Angelica and the son Reginald refused to turn the money over to Mrs. Spear's administratrix. In the suit brought by the administratrix to recover the amounts involved, it was shown that the accounts were opened by Mrs. Spear in person, and the claim of the

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administratrix was that she was entitled to the money because Mrs. Spear had had but one child—a son named Johnny, who died in the year 1870, being a child only three years of age.

Judgment was given the plaintiff. The Appellate Court gave the opinion that the evidence adduced tended to establish the fact that Mrs. Spear had lived in the same house for over thirty years and that no witnesses were produced to testify to the existence at any time of any child belonging to Mrs. Spear, except the son Johnny who, by Mrs. Spear's own admission, and the testimony of several witnesses, was proven to have died in 1870. No evidence was adduced to show that the decedent had ever admitted, except by opening certain bank accounts, the birth, death or existence in any way, or in any place or to any person, of any children except the son Johnny, who died in 1870. The fact that no relatives, friends, or neighbors, were brought forward to testify that at the time of her death the decedent was possessed of children and that the decedent had never in any way made known to any person the address of such children, raised a strong presumption that such children never existed, but were either the creations of the imagination of the decedent, or that such names were used by her for some purpose known only to herself.

Thereupon the bank paid over to Miss Malinda Strong the nine thousand dollars held in the name of Mrs. Spear's daughter Angelica, and the six thousand dollars held in the name of her son, Reginald.

To each of Mrs. Spear's intimate friends, Miss Malinda presented some memento from her aunt's personal effects. She requested Mrs.

Griscom to choose some keepsake from her aunt's old-fashioned but valuable jewelry. Mrs. Griscom had been an old schoolmate and a life-long friend of the dead woman.

"Well, Miss Malinda," said Mrs. Griscom, "I think I would better tell you something I had not intended to mention, because it might have looked as if I were grasping. The truth is, Mrs. Spear had herself decided what I was to have to remember her by. You remember her moonstone brooch? That was it."

"Remember it? Of course I do. When I was a child I never tired of looking at those moonstones, which seemed to me like sparks of fire in petrified smoke, and that stone in the center with the moon's face carved upon it, I verily believed possessed of mystical power. But it is years since I have seen it. Not since I came here to live with her."

"I noticed that, too. I made bold to ask her once if it was lost. She turned deathly pale and looked awfully distressed, and shook her head."

"I'll look among her things for it," said Miss Malinda. But the most careful searching availed nothing. Mrs. Spear's moonstone brooch could not be found among her personal effects.

The close investigation, however, brought about a discovery destined to fill Miss Malinda's future with doubt and perplexity. Underneath the hitherto unsuspected false bottom of the tin box Miss Malinda found a thin, flat manuscript book in her aunt's clear, small penmanship.

It began abruptly: "O, if I could only get back to my dear husband and my lovely baby girl! But *where are they?* Always by day and by night I am recalling the happiness of that other life. Sometimes it seems as if I could actually smell the



"Together, in the little boat on the glassy lake."

lapping of the water grows louder and more insistent, and changes to the clank, clank, clank of cars and wheels, and the gentle rise and fall of the little boat becomes rougher and is the swaying and jerking of a railroad train. The soft music grows discordant and changes gradually to the clang of the engine bell, and the screech of the locomotive. The sunset-tinted lake is gone, and I am out on a great level waste of snow broken by patches of brown, frozen earth. I am tired, so tired, of walking over it. I stumble and fall, and all at once here I am again. It is the same silent, vacant house. It is the same old dreary garden with its frozen snow-patched grounds, its leafless bushes, its tall poplars whose brown, bare branches and twigs, like naked fingers, interlace themselves across the gray sky. The people about me act as if they knew me. I do not remember them. I am confused. If I speak of my husband they think I mean the original of that ugly portrait over the mantel in that gloomy parlor. When I asked about my baby, they spoke of a boy called Johnny, reminded me that he

rich, heavy fragrance of the oleanders and could hear the soft lap-lap of the waves on the beach. I close my eyes, forget my dreary surroundings and dream that he—that man I love—and I are together again in the little boat on the glassy lake, which seems but a mirror-like reflection of the gorgeous sunset-tinted sky above us. We sail in and out among those isles of pink and gold until the gray veil of twilight falls slowly over the western sky and a tiny star creeps tremblingly out into the vast blue dome above us. Then my love lays down his oars, and with his adoring gaze upon me and upon the babe encircled in my arm, he lifts his flute and breathes his tenderness into the sweet notes that echo far o'er the still lake.

"But then—O, even then—it grows darker and darker, and the

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was dead, and showed me the photograph of a big-eared, open-mouthed three-year-old. I said no more. If I had told them about my lovely baby girl, with eyes like English violets and a mouth like a wild rosebud, they would have thought me crazy. They are determined to force this gloomy house, that homely man and that ugly-looking boy upon me as associations of my past. They are nothing to me. Yet I cannot explain why I am here, nor where my Love and my baby are. I am like one who while walking in sweet companionship in a sunny, flowery garden, suddenly finds himself in a cold, dark, lonely prison, and feels with vainly-searching fingers over the stone walls for a place of exit."

The next entry was dated 1883.

"God was good. I did find my way back. God is horribly cruel. I am here again. Night and day I used to wonder how I could get back to that happy life. Finally I made up my mind to go somewhere, anywhere, only so that I escaped from the silence and loneliness and all the unfamiliar people and things which everyone around me seemed to take for granted were familiar and dear to me.

"As always when my life changes, there was first the clank, clank of the car wheels, the roar and rumble of the rushing train, the clang of the bell and the shrieking whistle of the engine. When the people in the car all left it I, too, alighted. Presently I knew my way. I went on and on until I came to the terraced lawn and the peacocks pacing daintily upon it. Coming down the avenue of magnolias was the black woman who used to bring me my morning coffee. She held by the hand a lovely little girl. As soon as the black woman saw me, she threw up her arms and

clapped her hands and cried out in her soft guttural voice:

"'Foh de Lawd chile, if dar ain't your own mammy come back! Run, Honey, and tell your pappy your mammy done come home again.'

"I looked, and there on the vine-shaded piazza stood my Love. The bright sunshine glittered on his rippling hair and was reflected in the gem-like radiance of his eyes. Both he and the child were clothed in white, and on the lapel of his coat was a flower. He came down to meet me, opened his arms and enfolded me in his embrace.

"Then he said to the serving woman:

"'Take those black clothes off your mistress. Never let either her or me set eyes on them again. Dress her all in white.'

"So then the old life began again with the music on the sunset-tinted lake, the long, restful carriage rides through avenues of fragrant, many-tinted oleanders, the lover's caresses, the baby kisses and prattlings, the affectionate service of born servitors, and all the luxury and loveliness of living.

"Then came another baby—a boy this time—and we called him Reginald, after his father. So the happy days went on and on. Sometimes it would seem to me as if I could almost remember how it was before they began, and then I became confused and distressed. So I did as my Love bade me, and resolutely put all but the present out of my thoughts. I was perfectly happy.

"But one day I was wandering alone through the house and I came to a closet door, standing ajar. I had never noticed that closet before and I pushed the door open. Then I was frightened and cold and I began to cry. I knew not why. There was nothing in that closet except



"I came to the terraced lawn and the peacocks pacing daintily upon it."

that hanging on the wall before me were a little leather traveling-bag and a woman's long, black garments.

"Then the bad dream came again.

"There was the rattle and clank of the railroad cars, the demoniacal shriek of the engine, and its labored breathing, and the specters of smoke that came hurrying from its black throat and went scurrying past the windows and off into the roadside fields and melted into common air. There were again the great tracts of frozen brown earth with irregular patches of dirty caked snow. By and by I was walking, and I plodded on and on in the cutting wind. I was always alone. I was so tired I sat down to rest. Then suddenly I

realized that I was back on the porch of that vacant house where I had been so lonely and miserable. I want to go back to my Love and my babies and my happy life. But how to go?

"O God, hasten the day of my deliverance or let me die soon."

It was only after days and nights of agonized self-communings that Miss Malinda gained courage to place the manuscript book in the hands of the lawyer. He perused it attentively.

"I always knew Mrs. Spear was insane," he said as he handed it back.

"But," faltered Miss Malinda, "am I not enjoying that which be-

longs to others? Ought we not to institute a search?"

"A search for whom? Do you wish to employ some one to go to the Land of Nod to look for Dream Children? Now take, my advice, Miss Malinda, burn that book and never make any mention of it to anybody."

Miss Malinda followed his advice, hoping that with time she would

side and back entrances. As Miss Malinda answered the unwonted summons she was startled at the first glance by something repellantly familiar in the contour of the tall, slender, black-robed woman who stood waiting in the dim shadows. There was not enough light to discern the stranger's face. The caller neither moved nor spoke.

"Well?" at length queried Miss



"Miss Malinda started to close the door."

have forgetfulness and resultant peace of mind. Such might have been the case had it not been for a little incident which soon occurred, which, while it ended the matter, left it forever involved in perplexity and mystery.

In the semi-darkness of a November evening there came a ring at Miss Malinda's front door. This was an unusual happening, as the neighbors and tradesmen used the

Malinda, conscious of a vague fear creeping over her.

"May I see the lady who lives here?" asked the stranger in an uncertain, hesitating way.

"I live here," reluctantly admitted Miss Malinda.

"Is there not another lady who lives here also?" asked the stranger.

By this time Miss Malinda realized the cause of her vague terror. The stranger not only resembled

Mrs. Spear in figure but the voice reproduced the tones of her dead aunt, though overlaid with a slow, melodious enunciation foreign to Miss Malinda's ears.

"No, I live here alone," returned Miss Malinda, and started slowly to close the door. She regretted her words as soon as they were uttered.

"Oh, I beg pardon, I am sure. They told me at the depot when they saw a photograph I brought that this was the house. But it was an old picture. It must have been taken at least sixteen years ago."

"It was my aunt who lived here then. She is dead now."

By this time Miss Malinda, who felt herself cold and trembling from sheer fright and nervousness, had almost closed the door, and was speaking through a narrow opening. The stranger, however, made no movement to draw nearer.

"Dead!" she repeated in a low voice.

She drew her long, black veil aside with one hand and laid the other on the iron balustrade to steady herself upon the icy steps. It rushed over Miss Malinda how like her aunt's was every motion of the stranger, even to the slight limp in her gait.

As she turned away the caller said something in so low a tone that Miss Malinda did not then comprehend the meaning—not until later events revealed it.

"I told brother Reginald it would be no use," she murmured.

She turned her face and spoke over her shoulder.

"Excuse me for troubling you, Madam."

But Miss Malinda had already softly closed the door, turned the

key, and sunk cold and trembling with fear into the hall chair.

She was still unnerved when Mrs. Griscom came without ceremony through the side door.

"Has she been here?" she queried breathlessly. "I was in the depot when she showed the depot master a photograph. I looked over his shoulder and I said right away: 'Why, that's the Spear house!' So the depot master started her up here. You look all beat out. I guess she scared you same as she did me—she looked so like your aunt, only younger. She was the living image of Mrs. Spear when she came here thirty years ago. Who was she?"

"I don't know."

"Where did she come from?"

"I didn't ask," faltered Miss Malinda, realizing too late all that the stranger's coming might have meant.

"I got a good look at her," continued Mrs. Griscom, "while the station agent was talking to her."

She came closer to Miss Malinda and laid her hand impressively upon her arm. Her voice sank to a whisper: "That woman had on your aunt's moonstone pin. I saw it as plain as day. I could swear to that pin anywhere."

The women looked at each other a moment fixedly and silently. Then Mrs. Griscom cast a quick, frightened glance around the dusky room. She put her lips close to Miss Malinda's ear, and concealed the movement of her mouth with the back of her hand.

"Maybe," she breathed, "that woman was Mrs. Spear's daughter—you know who I mean. Your aunt herself must have given her that moonstone brooch."

# The Passing of Moon-Raker

BY LEO CRANE

The air was heavy with the scent of crushed grass and the odor of sweating horses. The sunshine bathed everything with its warm rays and vainly tried to dry up a great puddle of hoof-churned mud that lay across the road's dust. A little way off, a seeming range of dirty gray mountains, relieved here and there by a patch of vivid white, glowed intensely, but the breeze would ripple their slopes, showing plainly that the strata were of canvas, held by cords. The nearest of these shelters was very peaceful, as if trying to struggle patiently through the day's heat. The only sounds were the crackling of straw bedding, and the muffled booming of a drum that came sleepily on the faint breaths of air. Sometimes there would be a momentary hush, then a growing clanging crash, which in turn would die away again, as if something having made a great effort had become exhausted. Occasionally there would arise a sullen and monotonous growling and moaning of many beasts; sometimes the hoarse shouting of thick-voiced men.

The Big Show was going on. Everything else in the world seemed to have yielded it place.

It was very warm and drowsy in the tent for trained horses. A sleepy atmosphere invaded it immediately after the last of the excited bustling crowd had forced its way into the densely packed arena. The horses nodded lazily and munched their food. A weary man slept at one side, stretched out upon a bale of cut hay, and the sun darting in through the slits of the canvas painted his face with its hot stripes. At intervals, and nearly always fol-

lowing the grand crashes of the band, a flap would lift, allowing one or more silk-skinned beauties to enter, tired and nervous from the ring, and perhaps angry at the stupidity of thousands who had watched their heart-straining without evincing the slightest admiration. A circus is recognized as a place of the marvelous; it is only the superhuman that brings the audience to its feet. Then the flap would fall again, shutting out the staring eyes of curious and unfortunate boys, who leaned dangerously over ropes that they might see, and the many well-groomed satin necks would disappear again within the canvas stalls, and the subdued crunching of grain recommence.

Along toward the end of the sultry afternoon the band began playing quicker music. The mid-air acts were over. Now soon would come the racing, to be heralded by the maddening rush and thunder of the bumping chariots. There was but one star event intervening.

Suddenly a man appeared from a dressing-tent in the scarlet coat and velvet cap of a hunter. At the same time a magnificent horse, checked near one end of the stable-tent, began lifting and pawing his feet nervously.

"Moon-raker!" called out the man sharply.

Quickly the hostlers threw a saddle upon the chestnut. The man in red mounted and rode out toward the entrance to the greater tent—the flap was lifted, and when the beautifully proportioned creature had passed beneath it, stepping daintily, dropped again. A moment later there came a most reverberating

crescendo of brass and drums. Moon-raker had entered the arena to leap the bars.

Back in the stable-tent, where it had again grown quiet and the sunbeams danced in through the eyelets of the flaps, a young and strong horse, yet in training, lifted his head and gazed wistfully toward the runway. Then he buried his nose in the straw at his feet as if thinking.

"I could almost hate Moon-raker," he sniffed somewhat petulantly, one of his long ears lifted in nervous anticipation of the usual applause. "They will never give me a chance at the bars."

"Why do you want it?" asked mildly an older horse, pushing its pink muzzle over the edge of the canvas strip between them.

"Is it not my right?" said the other. "I can beat him in the practice jumps—but it is only Moon-raker, and nothing but Moon-raker when the people are looking on."

"Yes, yes," replied the other in a patient way, "Moon-raker is in fine training. And you must remember that it is much harder to make a good jump with the crowd staring. They seldom pardon a stumble and they easily forget the nasty falls. In the end of all things, it is perhaps best never to have heard their applause—it is so much noise—for when it dies away and the wide fields have ceased toying with the faint echoes of it, there is another act on and you are forgotten. Before your heart has stopped thumping, they are wild over some one else. Then the night falls, the tents are packed and the cars pull out into the dark. The place that had been your kingdom for a moment is left but an empty field."

"A year rolls around, and with the rains and the summer dust comes the

show again—the people crush their way inside and cheer again, but—do they care which horse clears the bars? Do they ever ask if it is the same of a year ago? Perhaps instead of the big chestnut there is now a lean white cob working the turn—do they question the change? Do they ask if the king is dead? No, no; they have paid to see the jumps, and they will cheer for or sneer at any one. This thing you covet as friendship and glory is but a passing sound, a foolish cry for which you have paid with the awful straining of your heart. It is not worth the price. Some day you will be old. They will be silent when you kick down the bars. Ah, that is the way of the crowd. To-day it is Moon-raker, to-morrow—well, you perhaps—but the day after? Who will reign then?"

"All jealous ones speak in that way," half sneered the younger horse, tossing his head wilfully. "Moon-raker tells the same tale because of his pride and his fear that I may be found better one of these mornings."

"Take care," muttered the cream reprovingly, "it is not good to wish for the shoes of a dead horse."

"I did not say a dead horse," quickly protested the other, "I merely meant—well, what do they do with a jumper when he becomes too stiffened for the highest bars?"

"A ring turn, usually. That was my case. I was never a king, but I could make the best of them strain to beat me. I am glad that they put me in the ring, though. A cream horse shows better there. Perhaps there is no crown, but—" said the veteran philosophically, "there is no risk."

"Now who would be a ring horse when the jumps are ready?" argued the youngster in the pride of his

ambition. "The same old thing daily—going round and round a little space—the same number of steps, the same figures, and the same bored tolerance from the people who have long ago grown tired of it. When they do clap their hands, it is for the dancer upon your back. I cannot understand why you do not long for the jumps again. Maybe I am different—but—if it were not for Moon-raker——"

"Perhaps some day you will be needed," replied the other a trifle angrily, for the ring-horse could be very dignified at times, "some day when Moon-raker does not clear the topmost bar."

"And what would that matter?" asked scornfully the youngster. "If he did not go over it, he would kick it down—it would fall—well?—"

"Suppose it did not fall?"

"I—I never thought of that," hesitated the jumper, growing suddenly thoughtful. "Suppose—suppose it did not fall?"

A moment later he turned to question the cream horse about it, intending to ask if he had ever experienced a stubbornness of the topmost bar, and if possible to learn the exact result. But two men were busy putting crimson velvet trapplings upon his counselor. The young horse buried his soft nose down into the straw again and continued to wonder.

If the top bar did not fall—Moon-raker would strike it, certainly, and—go lame perhaps—go lame, go lame, go lame. Then he would be the only one capable of making the jumps. He would have the long-wished-for opportunity to clear the hurdles before the staring thousands. And the young jumping horse who had been denied the laurel so long, almost wished that

Moon-raker would strike the top bar—and go lame, go lame, go lame. He could not help nor battle the temptation. He did not wish to see Moon-raker hurt, even though more than once he could have killed him for his pride, but he did so want a chance to clear the bars when the Big Show was on. The youngster impatiently rustled his hoofs through the straw, and wondered if his waiting would ever cease in the glorious surge of reality.

But was it not time for Moon-raker to reappear? Perhaps they had lengthened the jumping act. Never before had the veteran remained so long away from his blanket and stall. Then lowly a queer noise began to be heard. The nerves of the youngster's legs trembled and his snuffing nostrils twitched in doubtful anticipation of some fearful things. He had heard that same noise, only greater and wilder, on the night when the animal-tent burned, and he had known it, touched with the same suspicion of pity, when a man had missed both the rings and the net. The sleepy atmosphere of the stable-tent was quickly invaded by a growing hum. A few sharp excited calls rang out, and beyond the flap sounded dully the confusion of a throng. The young horse tossed his head in air and stared about in frightened expectancy.

Then came a surge against the canvas wall, the stern babble of hurried orders, a strange shuffling of hoofs and the questions of many people. The flap was raised. A peering, jostling crowd of curious people was jammed there. But the young horse saw only his rival, Moon-raker, coming slowly through the runway—not dancing in his usual elation, but whining and snuffing painfully, hobbling weakly

on three legs, while the man in the red coat struggled to uphold the fourth. At each wavering step the big shoulders of the horse lurched against this feeble human crutch. The stablemen gathered around to help. And Moon-raker, making a long stride forward in his old manner, stumbled blindly, and striking helplessly with the crippled leg, fell down upon his side.

There was decidedly a nervous movement throughout the tent. The older horses stirred and moved uneasily, while the half-trained youngster snorted wildly in fear and tried to tug his head out from the halter. With wide-stretched eyes he watched the bustling group near the entrance.

"Run for Hobbes, quick!" shouted the man who had ridden the jumper, tearing off his brilliant coat and pitching it recklessly into an empty stall. Another held down Moon-raker's head and gently gripped his nostrils.

"What's up?" yelled a lusty man, coming down the tent's center with great strides. "Moon-raker!" he cried, "Moon-raker hurt!" Breathless and pale of face he questioned the group of men with his eyes. "Who's to blame for this piece of business?" he gasped.

"Some one placed that top bar carelessly," explained the rider nervously. "He struck it going over and it jammed. He seemed to know it was wrong, somehow, and he balked at it twice, but I couldn't stand to spoil the act—I didn't know it was dangerous and I put him over it anyway." He wiped the beads of perspiration from his hot forehead and repeated feverishly: "I didn't know it was a stiff fence—" and then with a half whine, "and I couldn't stand to spoil the act."

"Who set up the fence?" de-

manded the boss. "Porter's gang," replied some one.

"The swine!" snarled the big man, viciously writhing back his tobacco-stained lips and showing his yellow teeth not unlike an animal. With hands closing and opening tremulously he glanced all about to see if any of the ring men were present. "I guess they're mad about that little talk we had last week, and so bein' white-livered, they'll take it out on Moon-raker. Well, may Gawd help 'em every one. If Hobbes says its a bad touch, they'll feel the weight o' my hands, so they will. The dirty, unwashed tent-liftin' swine!"

The young horse caught snatches of this garbled talk. And in a measure he realized vaguely that he would have his wish. The top bar had held firmly and Moon-raker was down as the result. He began estimating how long the veteran would be kept out of the jumping act. At any rate, he assured himself, even if it was only for the space of a day, he would be sure to have his chance—that coveted opportunity so longed for. And yet, instead of tossing his head proudly on high in the freedom of victory, the young horse seemed to feel his success as a heavy burden, and with a little half-hearted sniffle crept his nose down into the straw seeking comfort.

They led Moon-raker away to the far end of the tent, and until long after the Big Show was out and the dust-covered people had hurried away, the youngster could see the great old horse standing stoically upon three legs and slowly swinging the injured one with painful monotony. Like a patient king he seemed, brave and majestic in the very face of his defeat. One after another the uncouth hostlers, now strangely silent and merciful, paid

him their homage and offered him dainties from their supper. With a calm dignity the chestnut received their caresses—only he would gaze after them imploringly, when they went to their duties in far ends of the misty tent. Sometimes he would throw his handsome head about and look wistfully toward the old stall. Then the young horse would want to call out his sympathy, but whenever he saw the large and pain-touched eyes turned upon him, the feeling that he had longed for this twinged his heart, and he crouched down low again, whinnying pitifully as if some one had struck him with a lash.

When it was growing dark and the yellow lights had flared up at the tent-poles, he felt a strong hand upon his halter. The man who had worn the red coat stood there looking down upon him. There was something hard and pitiless in the man's expression which the young horse had never before noticed, and this selfish implacable something drove a fear down into his untried heart. He wondered if this man had ever spoiled an act.

"Better take him over 'em a few times," he heard the stable-boss say, "and may be we won't have to cut the jumping out to-night. See how he goes, anyway—"

When he was led out into the vast, empty, silent tent with its hundreds of rows of bare benches it seemed a desolate, fearsome place. A sudden chill waved over him, causing a few moments of weakness and violent shivering, as he thought of the topmost bar. But soon he was rushing at the jumps coolly, clearing and defying them. He was no longer the vain and sensitive youngster; he now felt himself a veteran, old and hardened. Where he once would have praised the fences for laming his rival, now he

cursed them. Instead of petty pride and insolence, he felt only his warm heart beating sympathy within him.

When he was brought back to the stall, Moon-raker's place was still vacant. Again the cream horse leaned his pretty head over from the opposite rack.

"Where is Moon-raker?" asked the new jumper, looking curiously all about the great stable-tent.

"They have taken him away," said the ring-horse gently. "They are always taken away after a fall like that. It was so with Prince Charming, who was even a better jumper than Moon-raker, and it was so with sweet Lady Grey."

Just then a faint sound echoed its crispness from a long way across the fields. The young horse twitched up one ear casually and then dropped it again. The cream seemed to be thinking. He rubbed his pale pink muzzle softly against the canvas partition.

"I am afraid Moon-raker will not be with us in the car to-night," he said at last, thoughtfully.

"It will be lonely without him," replied the young one.

"Yes," murmured the other sadly, "we two have traveled side by side for seven years—yes, it will be lonely without Moon-raker."

Then the stable-boss came in, cursing savagely at every one, but the cream horse did not explain this to his younger brother, for once again with its thousand teeming sights and mingled sounds the Big Show was on. Ten thousand people would soon clamor idly to see Moon-raker break the record. The great king, from across the vast silence of the fields, would not heed their plaudits. So the cream horse did not explain, for that would have been sending the rightful heir to his inheritance with an extra weight in his heart.

# THE THINGS INVOLVED *in* THE PURSUIT OF BIXBY

by Edna Kingsley Wallace

"Hang these buffet cars!" raged Osborne helplessly. "I'm starved. Why in the name of Famine don't they have diners on this train? I believe I could eat all the frosting off of Mt. Shasta—that would be a stomach-ache worth while," he added, smiling grimly upon the great snow-covered mountain. "But, Jove, it's all there is in sight except mock-turtle soup, and I'm ready to pass on that after four orders of it during two days. Bet that girl has good things in her hamper."

The wise virgin referred to, who evidently knew the exigencies of the trip from Portland to San Francisco, was charming, even piquant. She was possessed of youth, health and vitality, with subtle indications of humor around the brown eyes, the whimsical mouth, and the finely-modeled chin. Her brown hair showed a glint of gold, and the same sparkle ran through her whole personality. She stirred uneasily, as if conscious of scrutiny, and Osborne with instinctive courtesy withdrew his gaze and opened a magazine. Encountering the cheerful title "The Relative Value of Foodstuffs," he turned the pages feverishly, only to come upon a Thanksgiving story redolent of turkey and plum-pudding. Savagely he threw down the offending gad-fly of suggestion, and betook himself to the smoking-car.

After a cigarette he felt better, and had an inspiration—he would get off at the next station and buy some sweet chocolate. He had

heard somewhere that it is used by travelers in remote and savage localities to sustain life when other supplies fail. Returning a few minutes later to his section, nibbling his chocolate, he encountered a rather mirthful gleam in the brown eyes of the girl. "Good Heavens," he groaned, "I believe she knows what is the matter with me. If I could only manage to look pale and wan perhaps she would divvy up with me. Wish I weren't so husky."

There was a great deal of Osborne—six feet, two—to feel uncomfortable, so he retired early. He had heard that going to bed was the usual resource of the poor when they were hungry. Anyhow it was as good a way as any other to pass the time.

The next morning, owing to the early hour at which they were due in San Francisco, the buffet was closed, and not even a cup of coffee was to be had for love, guile or tips. Osborne was suffering with a splitting headache, and execrated the company with a right good will. He really looked ill—so ill that the girl felt that the time had come to be human rather than social. Accordingly, when she measured out her tea to be brewed with water boiled upon her tiny spirit lamp, she put into the silver tea-ball a double quantity, with a view to sharing the favors of fortune with her opposite neighbor. When the tea was ready, she called the porter and directed him to take it to the disconsolate

## THE RED BOOK

Osborne, who thereupon sat up, and with great avidity partook of this manna from heaven. He exulted, too, in the opportunity thus afforded for making the acquaintance of the girl, and concocted in his mind a graceful little speech of thanks whereby he might install himself in her good graces. But he reckoned without his host—or hostess—for that clear-headed young woman, while accepting his thanks graciously enough, indicated with perfect courtesy, but entire finality, that her kindly little deed was to carry no social consequences.

Osborne hoped to be of service in assisting the girl with her bags and other impedimenta when they should arrive at Oakland, but the well-feed porter made himself useful and delivered the young lady and her belongings into the hands of a fine-looking elderly gentleman, with whom she was soon lost to view in the crowd which swarmed toward the big ferry for San Francisco; and Osborne metaphorically waved his hat in farewell.

Two weeks later, about five o'clock on a bright December day, a tall figure clad in irreproachable afternoon garb emerged from a substantial house on Van Ness Avenue, and sauntered aimlessly toward California Street. It was Mr. Richard Tyrell Osborne, and he was bored. "Stupid things, these teas," he said to himself, discontentedly, "greet, eat, smile, guile, laugh, chaff, Beauty roses and homely Josies—" At this point in his reflections he turned west on California Street, and his roving eye was arrested by the sight of a man ahead of him walking rapidly. There was certainly something very familiar in the outlines of that dapper little figure. Was it—could it be—Bixby, Billie Bixby of '95?

Osborne quickened his steps, and arrived within hailing distance about thirty seconds after Bixby—for he it assuredly was—had entered a house in which some sort of function was evidently in progress, for carriages lined the street in front of it. Here was a dilemma, and uncertain what it were best to do, Osborne walked slowly to the next corner; then, turning, he retraced his steps and entered the house. It would be easy to see Bixby in the dressing-room, get his address, and slip out. Certainly he could not stand around outside, like a footman or a house-breaker.

But the few moments of indecision outside had given Bixby time to finish his operations in the dressing-room and mingle with the increasing throng downstairs. A man in attendance took Osborne's hat and stick, and that young gentleman stood bewildered before the mirror, mechanically smoothing his immaculate hair and wondering what in the name of common sense or idiocy he should do next. "May the good Lord deliver me from my hostess," he ejaculated, "but I am going downstairs." And he went.

As he reached the foot of the stairs, the butler approached and asked deferentially whom he should announce. "Want to find a friend in there first," he murmured confusedly, and bolted down the hall. He peered eagerly into the library—no Bixby. The music-room yielded no better results; he would try the dining-room. The latter presented the usual odor of coffee and roses, together with a confused whirl of pink silk candle shades and the other familiar paraphernalia of teas. Yes, at last, there was Bixby amongst a bevy of pretty girls.

Dodging waiters and the tails of the women's gowns, Osborne made



"Accepting his thanks graciously enough."

his way as quickly as possible to the side of the long-sought, grimly-pursued Bixby.

"Well, Dickie boy, where on earth did you come from?" exclaimed Bixby. "Jove! I'm glad to see you! You old globe trotter, have you been at home since we met in Paris, or are you forever wandering? Here"—turning to the young lady with whom Osborne had found him—"Miss Carter, allow me to present my friend Mr. Osborne, of Boston,

Egypt, Paris, and the 'Varsity eleven of Harvard, '95." Osborne bowed, laughed and murmured a few indistinguishable commonplaces; then turning to Bixby he said solemnly, "Billie, I wish to speak to you—alone."

"Good gracious," said that young gentleman, "have some coffee and things first—the salad is jolly. Here, waiter, bring—"

"No, no, Billie—nothing," interrupted Osborne with unnecessary

vehement. He might enter Mrs. Thingumbob's house and mingle with Mrs. Thingumbob's guests, but he would be hanged if he would partake of Mrs. Thingumbob's refreshments. "You see," he continued, I have just come from another one of these things, and besides," he added absently, "I never eat anything, anyway."

Reluctantly, Bixby took leave of Miss Carter, Osborne bowed, and the two friends betook themselves to a quieter spot, momentarily deserted by the eddying crowd. Before Osborne could reply to the rapid volley of questions fired at him by the irrepressible Bixby, he glanced up to make the agreeable discovery that the place in which they stood was in full view of the receiving party. The humor of the situation struck him, and he promptly went into silent convulsions of laughter, an agony of mirth wherein speech was impossible. His hilarity, however, came to an abrupt end as there entered his range of vision an apparition in nile-green broadcloth, trimmed with white fur. Surely there was something in the rounded curve of that pink cheek, in the glint of that brown hair that reminded him vaguely of—why, of course—the girl, the wonderful person who made tea for unhappy men with headaches.

"Billie," he exclaimed, "who is that girl—do you know her? There—the one in green."

"Who—Betty Stafford? Why, yes, she is a cousin of the family, visiting here from Portland."

"Cousin of whom? Do you know them?" inquired Osborne earnestly.

"Do I know them?" rejoined Bixby, bewildered. "What do you mean? How should I be here if I didn't?"

"Well, what is their name?"

gasped Osborne, and began to realize the difficulty of explaining anything to that rattle-brained, insufferably dense Bixby.

"Their name? Whose name? What are you talking about?" exclaimed poor Bixby, sore perplexed.

"Billie," said Osborne, "you see, I forgot to read the doorplate when I came in, so if you love your fellow man, tell him at once what—" At this moment a third man joined them, and the opportunity for explanation was lost.

After introducing his friends, Bixby said in response to a remark on the part of the new man, Bradley, "You want to meet the little cousin? Well, come on—so does Osborne."

"Wait a minute, Billie," pleaded Osborne, "you don't understand. I—"

"Don't understand what? Is Dickie boy shy? She won't bite him—come along."

And thus, willy-nilly, our unfortunate youth was swept toward the girl, whom he was indeed anxious to meet, but alas! also toward the two people whom he most desired to avoid, for Betty Stafford was standing only about ten feet from her aunt and cousin.

"Miss Stafford, allow me to present Mr. Bradley—and Mr. Osborne, of Boston, an old college chum of mine." Thus Bixby.

Bradley entered at once into animated conversation with Miss Stafford, while Osborne stood miserably by, nervously conscious that his involuntary hostess, Mrs. Stafford, was gazing inquiringly at him through her lorgnette, under which circumstances it was not easy to think of anything brilliant to say. He was sure that the girl had recognized him, but as she had given him no definite indication that such was

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the case, he hesitated to refer to their previous slight acquaintance.

Presently Bixby, who had darted off to speak to some one, returned, and Miss Stafford asked, "Have you all been out in the dining-room yet?"

"Oh, yes," babbled Bixby, "had a regular pink silk time out there—except Osborne. He wouldn't eat anything—too ethereal—never eat anything, do you, Dickie boy?"

Before Osborne could reply to this nonsense, Miss Stafford said, turning to him with a mischievous expression in her brown eyes, "Oh, yes you do—sometimes, when you can get it, don't you, Mr. Osborne? He is particularly fond of mock-turtle soup and sweet chocolate, Mr. Bixby," she added, "ask him about it."

"By the great jumping Jingo, what do you know about Osborne and mud-turtles?" exclaimed Bixby, perplexity written in every line of his face. "I thought you two had just met," he continued.

"Ask Mr. Osborne," rejoined the girl merrily.

At this juncture another guest claimed Miss Stafford's attention, and the young men withdrew.

"Bixby," said Osborne solemnly, as they settled themselves in a cab, "dine with me at the Palace, and I'll tell you a tale to make you weep; a tale of an inspired idiot, a long-eared ass—anything you please."

"Eat, drink, and be miserable?" quoth Bixby, flippantly, adding, "Why who is It?"

"I'm It," said Osborne, tragically.

"Well, out with it—what the deuce's the matter? Fire away, I'm all ears," avowed Bixby, still chuckling.

"All mouth, you mean," growled Osborne.

"If you weren't bigger than I am,"

exclaimed the indignant Bixby, "I'd put you through the door, you long-legged bean-eater."

"Oh, shut up!" rejoined the young man from Boston, "I can't tell you anything while this cab is making such an infernal racket over these cobblestones. Wait till we get down to the hotel."

Accordingly they jogged along, silent except for an aggravating, nerve-searching whistle on the part of Bixby. Bixby always did such things.

It was early when they reached the hotel, so they went at once to Osborne's room, and that gentleman proceeded to unburden himself of his woes, as follows:

"You see, I first saw her on the train, and—"

"Who is Her?" interrupted the bewildered Bixby.

"Why Miss Stafford, of course, you idiot—how can I tell you anything if you keep stopping me?" roared Osborne.

"Which Miss Stafford?" inquired Bixby, with delightful innocence and earnestness.

"Why my Miss Stafford, of course," rejoined Osborne, exasperated.

"Your Miss Stafford! Well, upon my word, Dick, for a Boston man you are rather speedy. But say, old man," exclaimed Bixby with renewed interest, "what does she know about mud-turtles and things?"

"Oh, that was the prologue," said Osborne with a reminiscent smile, but that is nothing to the fact that I came, they saw, I wilted—after I had laughed just a bit too long."

"Good, my boy—epigrammatic, but obscure. Try again," urged Bixby, lighting a cigarette.

"You see," continued Osborne with growing excitement, "she was on the train coming from Portland,

and she saw me eating sweet chocolate, and starving on canned soups, and they don't know me from Adam, for I went after you, and I didn't have a chance to explain, and she, and they—oh, hang it, what will they think of me?—and that girl—heaven only knows what she will think of me!—for I *was* an idiot."

"Deuced lucid," gasped Bixby, purple with laughter, "but I don't know yet exactly what you are driving at."

"Oh, I suppose it is funny," snorted Osborne, "but if you are so dense you can't understand English, I'll draw a diagram. Billie, I never set my two blue eyes on Mrs. Stafford and her daughter before in my life, and entered their house solely in pursuit of you, expecting to see you and then skip out. I hate teas," he added feelingly.

"Well, well," exclaimed Bixby, grinning, "light begins to break upon the Egyptian darkness of heathen countries. But how about the mud-turtles—that is what Billie wants to know."

"The mud-turtles, my boy," answered Osborne, "were mock-turtles. Millions of 'em," he added vaguely.

"Elucidate," said Bixby briefly.

"Oh, those stupid buffet cars—same old bill of goods every time, chiefly chicken sandwiches and mock-turtle soup. And Miss Betty Stafford was in the same car, and saw me seeking nourishment in sweet chocolate—like a woman or a schoolboy," said Osborne, smiling grimly at the recollection. He puffed vigorously at a cigarette for a moment, then thumping the table in front of him, burst forth, "And I wanted to know that girl, Billie, but I've everlastingly queered myself, and it is no joke."

"Explain, Dick, explain," re-

turned Bixby soothingly, "or let me explain—I'll do anything you like."

"Humph!" puffed Osborne as he nervously lighted another cigarette, "a nice humorous mess you'd make of it."

"Why on earth didn't you ask me to present you there and then?" queried Bixby suddenly.

"Oh yes—very simple. Why didn't I? Well, why? I don't know, except that there were only about thirty seconds available for the purpose, and those I used up being amused. The facts are easy enough to explain, but my *gaucherie* in not explaining them at the time is not so easy either to understand or forgive."

A bell boy arriving with letters at this moment, created a diversion and with his friend's permission Osborne was soon absorbed in the contents of his mail. After reading a page or two of an innocent-looking azure blue epistle, he let forth a resounding whoop which caused people in the immediate vicinity to believe there was a fire, and to fancy they smelled smoke.

"Read that, Billie Bixby!—it is simply too rich to be true," he gasped, convulsed with laughter, "but it is."

"Where? What is it?" said Bixby, taking the letter.

"Here, let me show you," returned Osborne, "listen to this—it is from Katherine Tilford—um, here it is, 'so sorry I did not know you were to be in Portland, for I wanted you to meet my friend Betty Stafford. However, the Fates are propitious, for she is visiting in San Francisco now, so there will be an opportunity for you to meet her after all, and I enclose a card of introduction, together with her address. You are to be a good boy, and make all haste to call.' I didn't lose much time, did I, Billie?"

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Bixby, by this time in an ecstasy of mirth, shouted in high glee. "It is up to you, now, old man. Of course Miss What's-her-name has written to Mistress Betty about you, and she is probably busy wondering whether you are yourself or another. Oh," he broke off, "it is lovely."

"Let's go to dinner, Billie," said

Staffords. Bixby had a theater engagement and departed early, leaving Osborne to smoke and think, to chuckle and swear softly, by turns.

"Betty," said Margaret Stafford after the last guest had departed, "let us sit down comfortably and



"Please let me caddy for you," said Billy coaxingly."

Osborne, with a return of his previous gloom, "I need nourishment, that is what I need."

"Cheer up, cheer up," chirped Bixby, "verily the worst is yet to come."

When they separated after dinner, it had been agreed that they should call the next afternoon at the

have something to eat and talk it all over. Papa has gone to the club for dinner—he hates cold party—so we can have a cozy chat, until it is time to dress for the Cotillion Club. I'm so tired, I believe I am glad the other girls had that dinner and could not stay."

"First of all," replied her cousin,

"tell me about that friend of Mr. Bixby—Mr. Osborne. I am wondering whether he is Katherine Tilford's friend, and if he is, why he did not say so."

"My dear, I don't know a thing about him—I have never met the man in my life—he never came to speak to Mama and me at all," said Margaret in a puzzled and rather indignant tone.

"You don't know him?" exclaimed Betty, wonderingly. "Then how did he happen to be here?"

"That is exactly what I should like to know," answered Margaret. "I am quite sure he did not come with Billie Bixby."

"If you are talking about the fair unknown," said Mrs. Stafford, as she entered the room, and sank in a tired heap upon the couch, "perhaps he did come with Billie, and Billie dashed in to speak to us without waiting for his friend—that would be entirely characteristic of Billie. Modern young men are so careless—their hostess is merely an incident, to whom no particularly deference is due."

"Or," put in Betty, "perhaps he is the Mr. Osborne whom Katherine Tilford has asked to call on me. Maybe he came to call, and got into the tea party before he knew what was going on. But," after a slight pause, "why didn't he make himself known as Katherine's friend? I give it up—it is too much for me."

"Well," said Margaret, decidedly, "it looks as if we should have to possess our souls in patience until we can ask one or two questions of Billie. I believe I will find some reason for telephoning him in the morning."

It may be said that Mr. William Bixby's remarks over the telephone the next morning were not particularly enlightening, his part of the

conversation consisting chiefly of chuckles. However, he promised to make the matter clear if he might drop in about five that afternoon for a cup of tea. He might? Very well—might he bring someone with him? Who? Oh, a friend, a nice chap, whom she would be glad to know. Yes. Thanks. Good-by. And with this Margaret had to be content.

As the two men ascended the steps that afternoon and rang the bell, Osborne said with blithe confidence he was far from feeling, "I'm making my party call, Billie, that's what I'm doing. I always do the proper thing."

They found Mrs. Stafford in the drawing-room, and after Osborne had been introduced, the good lady, pursuing her theory of Bixby's carelessness, said to the guiltless young gentleman, "But, my dear boy, why did you not present your friend yesterday?"

"Why, I supposed you knew him," replied wicked Billie, innocently. There are occasions when the literal truth is mystifying.

Mrs. Stafford turned rather blankly to Osborne, who thereupon said, "Mrs. Stafford, I owe you an apology; I did not come with Mr. Bixby yesterday, but quite by myself. I—" he broke off abruptly, and after acknowledging the introduction to Margaret, who with her cousin had just come in, found himself somewhat separated from the rest, and talking to Betty.

"Then you really are Katherine's friend," Betty was saying. "When did you last hear from her? My letter came several days ago, perhaps your news is later."

"I received a letter last night," returned Osborne, smiling inscrutably, "and as you see, made all possible haste to give myself the pleasure of meeting you."

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"Then you did come with Mr. Bixby yesterday without knowing anything about me—how curious!" Betty was still a bit puzzled.

"On the contrary," said this sorely beset young person, with a comical gesture of despair, "I came, not with Bixby, but in pursuit of him. Mrs. Stafford," he continued, rising and bowing to that lady, "may I continue my interrupted explanation?"

"Certainly," she replied, "but surely it cannot be as serious as you look."

"It is, I assure you—it is awfully serious. I entered your house yesterday a stranger to every one in it save Mr. Bixby, whom I saw coming in, and one whom—" A slight cough from the direction of Miss Betty Stafford indicated to him that a previous acquaintance with her was not to be remembered under these present circumstances. "Bixby," he repeated firmly, "was the only person I knew. My intention was to see Bixby, get his address, and slip out again. Then things moved pretty rapidly; there was no opportunity to explain, and, well—I didn't," he ended weakly. "Can you forgive me?"

"It was very droll," said Mrs. Stafford with graceful cordiality. "You are forgiven, certainly. Here is the tea."

Six weeks later, at the Country Club, Miss Betty Stafford and Mr. Richard Osborne were just about to

start around the links, when Billie Bixby joined them.

"Can't play, children. Lame wrist. Please let me caddy for you—please do," said Billy coaxingly.

"Oh, no, thank you," they replied in chorus, looking very much alarmed at the prospect.

"Couldn't think of it," said Osborne. "Make your wrist worse."

"And Bobbie Johnson would be so disappointed," added Betty. "He needs the money."

Billie only grinned sardonically at these transparent objections and reluctantly forebore to press his service upon the conscientious pair.

Later on, however, when they returned to the club-house for tea, establishing themselves in a quiet corner for a scientific discussion of the noble art of putting, and other important matters, the ubiquitous Bixby joined them, teacup in hand. Not being hailed with enthusiasm, he sat down with careful deliberation, and quoted sententiously:

"There was a young man so benighted,  
He never knew when he was slighted;  
He went to the party,  
And ate just as hearty,  
As if he'd been really invited."

"Shut up!" snapped Osborne, "I didn't." Then testily, "That subject is worn threadbare."

"Dear me!" retorted Billie serenely, "I wasn't referring to you at all, but to myself—at the present. Another sandwich, please."

# A SELF-SUPPORT- ING WOMAN

BY HAYDEN CARRUTH

November 12. It seems scarcely possible that it is over six months since poor, darling Charlie passed away and left me alone. Though in another way it seems years and years. I hardly know how I got through the summer, but it went somehow, and here it is almost winter. I must shake off this idleness and begin life anew.

Of course papa wants me always to stay here at the old home, and is very willing to support me, but though this may have been proper enough once it is no longer so. A self-respecting woman nowadays must be self-supporting, so all the authorities say. Really, I think I may yet find true pleasure in battling with the world.

I did two things to-day—bought this diary, in which I am going to set down all I do and think during the coming years, and subscribed for *The Fireside Fudge*. It is edited by the distinguished Mr. Dearchild, who, they say, is as wise as he is good, and writes so charmingly. It has many articles on ways of self-support for women, and I am sure I can find something useful to me in it. Ah, what would Charlie say? I cannot, *cannot* cease thinking of him.

November 14. I was up early this morning, and feel better than for a long while. I believe that my reso-

lution to be no longer a burden upon poor papa has helped me already.

The first number of *The Fudge* came at noon, and it more than meets my expectation. There are a number of articles such as I want, though they are in the back part and I have not got to them yet. There are such pages and pages of delightful fashions—I have been looking and looking at them, though I can't say that I long to try them, not one little bit. I am sure that I shall never again wear anything but black. Poor, poor Charlie! what would he think if he could see me. There are some pretty designs in half-mourning, but I have not looked at them much.

November 15. I was busy all the morning at odds and ends and this afternoon I spent some time reading in *The Fireside Fudge*. I meant to get around to the self-support articles, but I found such a charming story just back of the fashions. It was a real love story—I never expected to read another, but I got started before I knew what it was. The hero was such a fine, strong character—a young minister in a poor parish. And after such struggles he won the rich girl (hardly good enough for him) and had such a splendid call to a lovely church in Brooklyn. I mean to get up early in the morning and read those

woman's work articles *before breakfast.*

November 16. I overslept this morning, but I was down to breakfast, and after that I helped mamma for a couple of hours. Then I took *The Fireside Fudge* and came up to my room. Delightful Mr. Dearchild, the editor, is just as charming

is hard to decide on what to do when there is such a wide choice. Of course I am shut out from the professions, as I don't care to give the time necessary for study, otherwise I think it would be lovely to be a lawyer. I don't know about the jury, which might be rather horrid, but I'm sure the judge would always



"I am going to set down all I do and think."

as I expected. Somehow he seems to fathom a woman's heart to the very bottom. He has two lovely articles in this number—one, "How to Carry a Cat in a Basket," and the other among the self-help papers entitled, "Hints to Ladies on Writing an Epic Poem." I read all of this department at last, and am sure that I have been much benefited. It

be on my side, especially after I can introduce just a little bit of color into my dress. I don't think I'd like nursing, or chicken-raising, or being a newspaper reporter, or running a milk route, though they are all highly recommended. One correspondent thinks there is a fine field for ladies as drivers of ice-wagons, and another says she has been a

locomotive fireman for two years and loves the work, but I don't take to either. I wonder what dear, dear Charlie would say if he could be here to advise his little widow. I know one thing he would say—get off this terrible black and get into half-mourning. One can do so much more with a *little* something besides black.

A Mr. Tulkington, a young lawyer, called here this afternoon to see papa on business. Of course poor, blundering papa must introduce us. He looked at me in the boldest way I ever saw. Couldn't he *see* that I was in no mood to be *stared* at? Actually, I turned my back on him. I was determined to *teach* him to see.

December 20. My poor diary has been neglected for weeks, but no one would believe how busy I have been. I finally decided on stenography and typewriting for my support, and I have been attending a school for such things. I am sure the typewriting is making the ends of my fingers very broad, but one must expect to suffer some hardships when one goes into business. Learning that dreadful shorthand is very, very hard work, but the knowledge that I shall soon be able to earn my own living and be dependent on no one lends me strength. I have begun to let up a little on that horrid black—really, it was too much. And everybody says that the little lightening up I've introduced into my dress helps so much. Though I *know* that I shall never be able to go back to the colors that I used to wear. I wonder if Charlie would want me to. Perhaps he would. That Mr. Tulkington (what a ridiculous name!) actually asked a month ago if he might call. My dear little diary must know what I told him. But he seems to have the

*most* business with papa. And the *worst* luck finding papa in.

January 24. All this time I've been working away at that awful shorthand. It gets worse and worse, but it means freedom, so I do not complain. I keep reading in *The Fudge* of other ways to become self-supporting, and sometimes I wish I had become a letter-carrier, or an author, or something; but it's too late now. Mr. Tulkington happened to be on the same car when I came home to-day and insisted on holding his umbrella over me from the corner. Nothing very odd about this except that *it wasn't raining*. He's not so disagreeable as he might be, but it seems impossible to make him understand that I don't want his attentions. No, nor those of any other man with that dear image which I shall always carry in my heart.

February 28. There has really been little to record in my poor diary for weeks. I'm still going on at that school and it's as detestable as ever, but it leads to freedom. I get so much comfort from *The Fudge* every month. It has such a variety of articles. I was just reading "A Hygienic Substitute for Boiled Water," by Dr. Cereal Tuber, author of "How to be Happy though Hungry," and mamma is interested in a series called "Family Living on \$85 a Year," by Mrs. Hope Famineford. There is a piece by "Aunt Prudy" entitled "A List of Two Hundred Things Improper for Young Ladies to Do." I can't see that more than three or four of them apply to *widows*.

That man with the absurd name, Mr. Tulkington, actually has quit all pretence of wanting to see papa and asks for me every time he calls. Well, one can't be positively boorish, so *sometimes* I see him. I think I



"The most unexpected thing has happened."

might endure him oftener if he didn't have such a positively *foolish* name.

March 10. I'm almost through the school, and in a few days I shall be a self-supporting woman. How good it seems. I shall know *real* independence for the first time in my life. I'm having two new gowns made, subdued but not black. Rather prettily trimmed I think. They are to be my *business* dresses. Of course one couldn't go to an office wearing black. I wonder where I shall get a position. Mr. Tulkinghorne called this evening. Really, he is more absurd than his name. He was positively rude, and I shall *not* be at home the next time he calls. He said he thinks a woman doesn't necessarily need to be self-supporting. You may be sure I told him what *I* think.

March 14. I've finished the school at last, and now for a position! I

called at several places to-day where they have advertised for a stenographer, but without success. Saw Mr. Tulkinghorne on the street as I was coming home, and, actually, I ran. I was determined that I would not see him after the way he talked the other night about a woman's working. He seems to think a woman ought to be a doll, a plaything. He will be wiser before he gets through. When he caught up with me he was very polite in his awkward way, and didn't say a word about a woman not being self-supporting. Really his name is just the one for him—he is just like it.

March 16. Out looking for a position again to-day. No success. Not discouraged, however. Mr. Tulkinghorne called this evening. I was in the hall when he came in, thinking it was Mrs. Parker, so I couldn't avoid him. Later he spoke about his queer name. It seems it is one

to be rather proud of after all. The Tulkinghorns came over with William the Conqueror, he says, and are a very old and respected family in England. He referred three or four times to the fact that his first name is Arnold. I wonder if the absurd fellow thinks I shall ever call him that. He can really be very pleasant when he tries. I think that at last I have made him understand that I'll have no foolishness. I am going to write to the editor of *The Fudge* and ask him how a self-supporting woman gets a job.

March 20. At last I've got the longed-for position! It's in a law office, and I've been at work to-day! I've just got home, and haven't had dinner yet, but I can't wait to record the good news in my dear, patient diary. At last I am independent, and how proudly I shall fetch home my first week's wages Saturday night. I'm sure no one in the world can understand my joy in at last being dependent on *nobody*. If I happen to see Mr. Tulkinghorne soon how I shall exult over him.

The idea that women shouldn't be self-supporting!

P. S. It's almost midnight now, and the *most unexpected* thing has happened! I scarcely know how to tell it even to my own little diary. Well, Arnold called, and—proposed! He said I said, Yes. I don't remember. I suppose, though, that it's settled. I found out from papa a long time ago that he is very well-to-do, and—why not? Even the name is a very aristocratic one in England. Besides, a woman isn't responsible for her married name. Arnold has it all planned that we shall be married in June. He made me write a note of resignation to those lawyer people. I don't care much—the office was stuffy, and one of the firm was quite rude because a long letter intended for a client in an important case I sent by mistake to the man on the other side. I can't see that it made much difference. Arnold agrees with me, too, and he ought to know, because by an odd coincidence he happens to be the *lawyer for this other man*!





## His Story

BY CLINTON DANGERFIELD

He tore open the long envelope viciously, then paused wearily before he unfolded the sheets within.

"If only some one of these fools could write half as well as each thinks he does," he said aloud to himself, glancing at the pile of rejected manuscripts on his left hand. "Why haven't some of 'em got the power of looking into the human soul as it really is—of seeing it naked in all its strange varieties of good and evil?" His trained eye skimmed through the first and then the second page of the manuscript he held, not line by line, but reading in paragraphs, swiftly, unerringly. He did not go past the second page, but flung the story contemptuously on the heap with the others.

"There's no use in hoping for anything decently good," he muttered wrathfully. "Villains as black as ink—heroes as pure as snow—what crude impressionists people are when it comes to observation of their fellow man! Pope was a fool when he told Tom, Dick and Harry to make men their study—a fool or else a poor judge of human capabilities. What's that, Herrin?"

A younger man, looking quite excited, came through the open door.

"Fancy!" he announced, "I've got something really fine this morning. New name, but it won't be unknown long! By Jove, this will pass Stamford himself without any trouble. And I know you will like it."

The speaker held out a short story manuscript, evidently running about the conventional three thousand words. Bassett took it and shook open the pages with interest in his

eye. He knew Herrin's finely critical taste, and was prepared for an agreeable literary surprise.

But for the surprise he received on reading the neatly typed pages he was not prepared. The younger man, who sat watching him in pleasant expectation of delighted comments, saw the assistant editor turn white as he read, while the fingers holding the pages trembled visibly.

The younger man's interest shifted at once from the story to the assistant editor.

What on earth could be affecting him so? Was it nerves? But how could one associate nerves with Bassett, whose calm if somewhat sleek intellectual front moved untroubled through the ways of life; Bassett, whose good salary, excellent home and yet more excellent health made him envied of many men; Bassett, whose keen perceptions had more than once enabled him to guide his firm's publications into the ways of fortune.

Then a call for Herrin made that gentleman rise reluctantly and leave the room, still pondering on the assistant editor's agitation. He closed the door after him and Bassett, finding himself alone, dropped the manuscript to the floor.

"My God!" he said slowly, and then once again, "My God!"

In his mingled horror and amazement he had quite forgotten his own wish that writers might have the power of observing the soul stripped of all covering. He knew only, he felt only, that his own soul had somehow, somewhere, stood stark

before a burning eye, had served as subject to a scorching pen.

There it all was—his past which he had thought so securely buried! Of course his own name was not used, but the incidents stood out with damning distinctness, just as they had occurred, not only the incidents but his every thought which he had had at that time; his impulses toward reparation, his vacillating cowardice which had swept those impulses away, all the comfortable consolations he had offered himself, all the dastardly sophisms he had called to his aid, were written there. The mere giving of the incidents shook him badly enough, but the unveiling of all his thoughts, every process out of which that sordid, miserable tragedy had been constructed, how in God's name had this trenchant writer gotten at those?

*She had not written it.* That much was assured. Not only because she had been almost illiterate, country bred, accepting as marvelous many things which his superior brain had scorned; not only because of all this, but because she—was dead. Her lips had been safely sealed by that wax which cannot be broken. The signet of silence eternal had been laid on them.

Ten years ago she had died, an opportune death, for she had no longer a *raison d'être*. Since then all had prospered with Bassett, prospered mightily. No thought of those lonely last hours had haunted him. Knowledge of her death had come to him remotely, comfortably, but with assurance.

Now he crushed the pages in his hand and spoke to himself again. "Part of this she could have told," he said slowly, "but part she could not have told—to write all this it would have been necessary to—"

He checked himself and shud-

dered. He could not finish his sentence, could not go on and admit that to have written this the author must indeed have seen a soul bare of defences, bare of covering phrase and dubious eye—and that soul his own!

Suddenly and feverishly he looked for the name and address. It was written, very legibly, at the right hand corner, on the top of the first page.

"John C. Blackwell," it ran, "Twenty-nine Blank Avenue, City."

The assistant editor stuffed the manuscript into his vest pocket, seized his hat, and went steadily to the elevator. He was conscious of only one thought, one purpose. He would interview this Blackwell—he would find when and how—

A friend spoke to him on the elevated as he seated himself, but Bassett never heard him, and, somewhat awed, the man respected the editorial abstraction, supposing respectfully that some mighty phrase was germinating in Bassett's mind.

But Bassett was not able even to think. He was merely repeating an unanswerable question to himself, as we so often do in distress.

At Number 29 he found John C. Blackwell readily enough. That gentleman was a physician. When he recognized Bassett, marked deference came into his manner.

The editor was outwardly as smooth as ever.

"Not to trespass on your valuable time, Doctor," he said pleasantly, "I will say that I came to talk over your manuscript with you. You show wonderful power for a beginner."

"It is good then—is it?" asked the physician. "I thought it wonderful myself—but of course my judgment in such affairs is not much."

Bassett wondered vaguely at the man's naivete.

"You undoubtedly possess extraordinary literary ability," admitted the editor. "But I would like to know—"

"The ability was not mine," interrupted the physician bluntly. He glanced around a little nervously and then said, lowering his voice, "In fact, there is—"

He paused. "You say it is not yours?" said Bassett in a muffled tone. "Whose then?"

"Mr. Bassett," said the other frankly, "the whole affair is so very peculiar that to any one but you I would be afraid to tell it. But now that the manuscript has affected you enough to bring you to my office, now that you admit its power, I will tell you the story within that story, if you will promise me on your honor not to repeat it. I can't have my patients thinking me insane."

"I promise," said Bassett, in the same muffled voice.

"Well, then," said the doctor, tipping his office chair back a little, and drumming on his desk with the edge of a paper knife, "I must first tell you that I've no literary ability whatever—can't even get up a readable medical address." His shrewd kindly eyes smiled from his tired face as he looked frankly into Bassett's well-masqued countenance. "However, I have, thank heaven, the gift of healing."

The editor nodded assentingly.

"This gift has carried me into strange places, but ten years ago—" Bassett started slightly, but the physician, wrapped in his tale, did not observe it. "Ten years ago," he went on, "I was called to see a very common case—that of a woman who had staked all and had lost—on what we call love. Her eyes had the tragic look of one who might have been sister to Constance in her knowledge of grief—

only that in this poor wretch's case, grief had the added sting of shame. She had gone down as low as a woman can, and yet, do you know, she had kept something virginal about her? Something fresh enough and pure enough to keep the growing of shame always in her heart. Her cheeks were foul with paint, but she could blush as though she were just from a country lane. I beg your pardon?"

"I did not speak," said the editor between set teeth, cursing himself for the groan which had escaped him.

"She was very ill," pursued Blackwell. "There was no hope, and I told her so. She smiled and said it was the best thing for her, and then added that she was troubled over one thing alone. She had a little commission which must be attended to. She could not rest in peace unless it were.

"I offered to be of service if I could. Something about that poor wreck touched me infinitely." He stopped.

"Go on," said Bassett feverishly; "what was the commission?"

"She told me to look in a certain drawer—you'll excuse me if I smoke, and you'll have a cigar?"

Bassett took the cigar, almost unconsciously, and as unconsciously began crumbling it between his fingers.

"She told me to look in that drawer—there are the matches—better light your weed—and that in it I would find a manuscript, a story."

Bassett stooped for the broken cigar, which he had dropped. "Go on," he said, striking a match and lighting the recovered fragment.

"I found a package neatly labeled with the very title of the manuscript sent you. She told me to take it home, to seal it up and in ten years

to send it to the editor of the *Dominion Magazine*."

"In ten years," stammered Bassett. "Why at that time—"

He was on the verge of saying that at that especial time he had no more imagined that he would some day be on the staff of the *Dominion Magazine* than he would have thought of being Lama of Thibet. But he swallowed his words.

"After I got home, after the funeral, indeed, which was a pauper's of course, I remembered the manuscript which I had shoved into my desk and I proceeded to look over it."

"Yes."

"Now comes the strangest part of my experience—"

"The strangest part," repeated Bassett vaguely.

"Yes sir—the very strangest—there was nothing on those pages—they were blank!"

"Blank?"

"Absolutely! It seemed a foolish thing to do, but a promise is a promise. I sealed the package, I put it away—and I forgot all about it—until last week. Then, for no earthly reason that I could trace, those blank pages sprang to my memory. I went straight to the drawer in my desk, took them out, and broke the seal. What do you suppose stared me in the face?"

"How could I tell you?" said the other irritably.

"There was the story just as I sent you—her own story I take it—nicely typed and all ready to be sent!"

"I should call that the strangest of all," said Bassett dully, aware that the words dropped mechanically from his lips, aware that he was trying to keep up appearances by sheer instinct.

"I knew you wouldn't hoot the whole thing," said the pleased phy-

sician. "Now a man in my profession would have said that it had been there all along—that I'd had something the matter with my eyes when I first took the stuff. But my eyesight is good and I'm preeminently a sane man. I've very little imagination."

"I think you have stated it correctly," returned Bassett, as mechanically as before.

"Well—I sent it in—the ten years were out to the minute—and you know the rest."

"And I know the rest," repeated Bassett.

"Well—what you going to do about it?" asked the physician curiously.

"What am I going to do about it?"

"Yes! Are you going to print it?"

Bassett burst into a loud, harsh laugh. "Print it—of course. But first I must pay for it. Here's your cheque."

"It's not my story. I don't want anything for it."

"Take it," said the editor roughly, "and sign the receipt. You can have a stone put over her with it, if you like."

The physician shrugged his shoulders but he wrote the receipt. "How do you explain this?" he asked, speaking as he signed his name.

"I don't explain it," said Bassett. Then he roused himself. "Doctor, you'd best not tell this to any one else. It sounds—queer. People might—"

The physician nodded. "Good advice, and I'll take it. But I want to see the stuff when it comes out."

"Oh certainly," said Bassett. "You've not kept a copy, have you?"

"No—never thought of it."

"Well, good day," said the editor jauntily, and swung downstairs, a keen reaction setting in. He had that accursed thing in his pocket.

It was his. He had paid for it. Never again should its hateful pages unfold! As soon as the car reached the bridge he got off, tore the manuscript into infinitesimal fragments, and scattered them among the gulls swimming below. Then he went back to his office.

A week passed. The loss of the story had been ingeniously accounted for to Herrin, and Bassett was, or at least believed himself, at peace. He jested and laughed with Herrin and was in the very midst of a really witty commentary on the chief editor's new ideas for the magazine, when suddenly the jest froze on his lips and the hair of his head stood up. There, among the sedate pages of a story just received from a well-known essayist, lay the destroyed story, staring up at him in clear black and white.

Bassett recovered his composure, said something about the heat, extracted the objectionable manuscript, and tossed it into the fire as soon as Herrin's back was turned. Then he wrote to the essayist asking where he obtained the fiction enclosed. Its title, he wrote, was simply "Unveiled"—there was no signature. The essayist promptly denied all knowledge of it.

Each succeeding week was marked by a similar incident, only the story came through different sources. Each time it happened to fall into Bassett's hands, but he shook with terror to think what would happen if its constantly recurring editions should reach Herrin. His morbid fear of the printing of the manuscript increased daily. Here, perhaps, it would not matter so much, but there were those, he told himself, those in other places, who would not fail to read between the lines and to drag him down into the very dust through the knowledge so obtained.

He quite forgot, as we all do, the element of safety that lay in the genuine indifference the world really feels, except for a passing moment, toward the affairs of individuals.

Week by week the man walked as one beneath the hair-suspended sword. At last the blow fell. The story, found strapped to the jests of a well-known humorist, was gleefully hailed by Herrin and as gleefully selected by the chief for the next number.

A famous illustrator was to add to its effect, and when at last the magazine appeared, the editor-in-chief turned first to "Unveiled" and glanced over it. In the pleasure it gave him he quite forgot the sudden indisposition of his assistant editor, who was that very night outward bound on a throbbing steamer. As the chief turned the pages, Bassett, white faced, expatriated, was reading the quiet writing of the stars as if hoping vainly to find there relief from the torture he had undergone.

Crushed in his hand he held the order of his doctor to seek health in a long sea voyage. He had chosen the south coast of Africa, and when at last he landed, a new sense of security came over him. That first evening he stood contentedly at a bar, drinking a new mixture, when the conversation of two men near him attracted him.

"It's in an American magazine," he heard them saying. "Funny part of it is that though it treats an old story, the circumstances were peculiar and so well told that the fellow's dastardly scoundrelism reminds me of Bassett's behavior in—"

Bassett's glass fell crashing to the floor. He stumbled out into the night. When the water closed over him for the last time, he had really escaped the wool-shod Nemesis of the press.



## The Corner in Gasoline



BY EDGAR FRANKLIN

"My dear boy," said the elderly Mr. Roxham, smiling rather ponderously across his library at the younger man who tilted uncomfortably on the edge of a leather chair, "I fear, as I say, that it may be a trifle difficult to show you wherein lies my objection to yourself as a son-in-law. On the point of morals you are, I believe, everything that could be desired."

"Thanks," said Rollins, dryly.

"Your income, too, I am aware is unquestionable."

"It's enough for two."

"Quite so. But suppose, Mr. Rollins, suppose that to-morrow some unforeseen calamity should sweep away your money—eh?"

"Make a national upheaval," responded Rollins somewhat flippanently. "Dad believed in government bonds."

"Nevertheless, admitting the supposition, what would you do?"

"Do? Why—go to work, I suppose."

"Precisely. Have you ever done a day's work in your life?"

"I never had to," admitted Rollins, a bit sheepishly.

"Ah? And what would you go to work at?"

"I—I—why, really, I don't know, Mr. Roxham," said the young man impatiently. "I presume I'd find something."

"But you don't know just what?"

"No, of course I don't."

"Well, sir—that is my point!"

announced Mr. Roxham, puffing to a triumphant standstill.

"But it's all bosh, you know," Rollins cried. "There's no chance of any such catastrophe, sir. The United States government is still quite sound, I believe. I can take care of Lucile, Mr. Roxham—and I love her!"

"I don't question it, sir; but that is not the point at issue. My father, Mr. Rollins, was a business man!" Mr. Roxham leaned far back in his desk chair and puffed his cigar to brilliancy. "His father before him was a man of affairs. Together they laid a foundation for the fortune which I have succeeded in building. Some day, I shall be called away—and I have no son to take the reins from my hands."

"No," interpolated Rollins a bit vaguely.

"My son-in-law must be a man of business acumen," pursued the old gentleman. "A man of my own stamp—tireless in attention to business, keen to see an opening and take advantage of it, and hold the advantage, once taken. Why, my dear Mr. Rollins, it may sound egotistical to you, but how many men in my line do you suppose have held out against the Trust, since it formed eight years ago?"

"I—I really don't know."

"Just one! And I am that man, sir; and our company has shown increased profits every one of those eight years, under my management.

Could you do as well, Mr. Rollins?"

"Good Heavens! No!"

"Well, sir, there you are!"

"But, my dear Mr. Roxham, I'm not applying for a position as trust-defier. All I ask is Lucile, and I—"

"And could you care for the vast interests which will be Lucile's before many years? Honestly, now."

"Honestly, I don't know."

"But you have never done anything which would seem to indicate a fitness for such a trust?"

"I suppose not."

"You have it in a nutshell," concluded Mr. Roxham, turning to his desk with an air of finality. "I like you, Mr. Rollins, frankly, I do—but you see my position. I dare not risk leaving Lucile's fortune in incompetent hands."

"Then that is final?" asked the young man, moving dejectedly toward the door.

"At least, Mr. Rollins," replied Roxham, with a faintly sarcastic smile, "until you have shown some evidence of talent in the lines I have indicated."

The library door closed with just a trifle more noise than was necessary.

Rollins reached the deserted veranda and was staring moodily across the lawn toward the Sound, when a bewildering mass of yellow hair and pink chiffon tripped quickly down the stairs and grasped his arm.

"Jack, dear! What did papa say?"

"Say, little girl?" groaned Rollins. "Well, he said several things—chief among them being—'No!'"

"Jack!"

"Papa regards you as a side issue to his dollars," continued the young man acidly. "If I can manage the dollars, I can have you. Being unable to furnish an affidavit testifying to my business capacity, I can't. There, as papa remarked a moment ago, you have it in a nutshell."

"He didn't say that?"

"He did, indeed. He said that the son-in-law he needed in the business must defy Trusts single-handed and—well, he didn't think I'd fill the bill."

"But you—you could."

"Undoubtedly," said Rollins, with a mournful smile. "But how am I to convince papa?"

"But, Jack, dear, didn't he give us any hope?"

"No," said the young man slowly, running over the interview in his mind. "I can't say, Lucy, that he left even one ray."



"What did papa say?"

Life thereafter assumed a sombre tone for the lovers. They met as usual, but under a cloud of heavy sorrow. They thought independently of ways and means, and they thought together, to no end. They discussed the advisability of Rollins' entering an office incognito and fighting his way to the fore in the business world. The proposition

wasn't altogether palatable to Rollins, but he considered it seriously before many days. They went into the ethics of eloping and discarded the idea as too sensational—and resurrected it once more as the only hope.

In fact, the matter might have ended in some such fashion, had not Rollins taken it into his head to drive down to the depot with his groom in the box-wagon.

The box-wagon was used to haul the gasoline which propelled Rollins' little yacht up and down and around Long Island Sound, and under ordinary circumstances a drive in it would have been equally distasteful and uninteresting to the young man.

Lately, though, he had been trying to accustom his pampered spirit to rubbing elbows with the masses, preparatory to a possible debut as bill-clerk, and a drive with this particular voluble groom seemed likely to prove a stiff, but efficacious, dose in the treatment.

In itself, the ride was not noteworthy. The groom wondered if he personally was suspected of anything which made watching necessary, or if his employer had gone mad—and chose horse as a safe, non-committal topic of conversation.

Rollins replied in impolite grunts and thought longingly of Lucile; and when the railroad station was reached, penetrated the freight-yard himself in search of the gasoline.

"Yes, sir, I guess yours is here, sir," said the freight man, glancing fearfully toward a double row of barrels. "There's no end o' the stuff come in this mornin'!"

"Five barrels are mine."

"Yes, sir. Them other ten is Mr. Roxham's."

"Mr. Roxham, eh?" repeated Rollins.

"Yes, sir. Marked 'Rush,' an' they must 'a' come like a streak—shipped last night."

The conversation didn't interest Rollins at the time. He cut it short and called the groom and the box-wagon, saw the barrels put into place, threw away his cigar and started for home.

The young man stared gloomily at the dusty road. He felt vaguely irritated at the groom for being there at all. He stifled his peroration on horse in the most unkind fashion, and felt a little resentment against the law which prohibited his stifling the groom also. It would have been a pleasant little outlet for his feelings. Presently, for no particular reason, he fell to cursing the groom mentally. Then he cursed the masses in general. Then, seeking to particularize in his cursing, he had selected one Theodore P. Roxham as a peculiarly fit subject, when the groom remarked:

"Ottermobile busted ahead, sir."

"So it is," muttered Rollins, squinting at a big motor car which had apparently paused unexpectedly on its way to the station.

"Now, that's the worst o' them ottermobiles," pursued the groom, happily. "Take a hoss, now. He don't need no gasoline, he don't need no—"

"Plague take it!" floated from the region of the auto.

"Humph!" chuckled Rollins, scenting a fellow spirit in the neighborhood. "Drive up to them."

In the rear seat bounced up and down a heavy, familiar figure—Roxham! His features were contorted with a variety of emotions, all of them seemingly of apoplectic violence.

"But great heavens!" he roared, unaware of the box-wagon's approach, "can't you make it go?"

"But when the fuel is gone!" cried a wizen individual on the front seat, waving his hands wildly. "To the last drop, yes!"

"Curse the last drop!" thundered Mr. Roxham. "Why didn't you say so before we left home? Eh?"

"But I have!" protested the unhappy little chauffeur. "As we leave the house, I say it; that sufficient of the fuel it is not to conduct us to that railroad station, far less to the New York. And you, m'sieur, have say 'never mind, never mind, only be quick' — that you have the great hurry. And now we stand devoid of motion. *Bien!*"

"Bah, sir! You talk like an ass!" spit forth the angry gentleman, as he hopped to the road and surveyed the machine with helpless rage.

"But I!—I!" vociferated the little man, pointing excitedly to his person with both fore-fingers. "Is it that I should have the blame? I!"

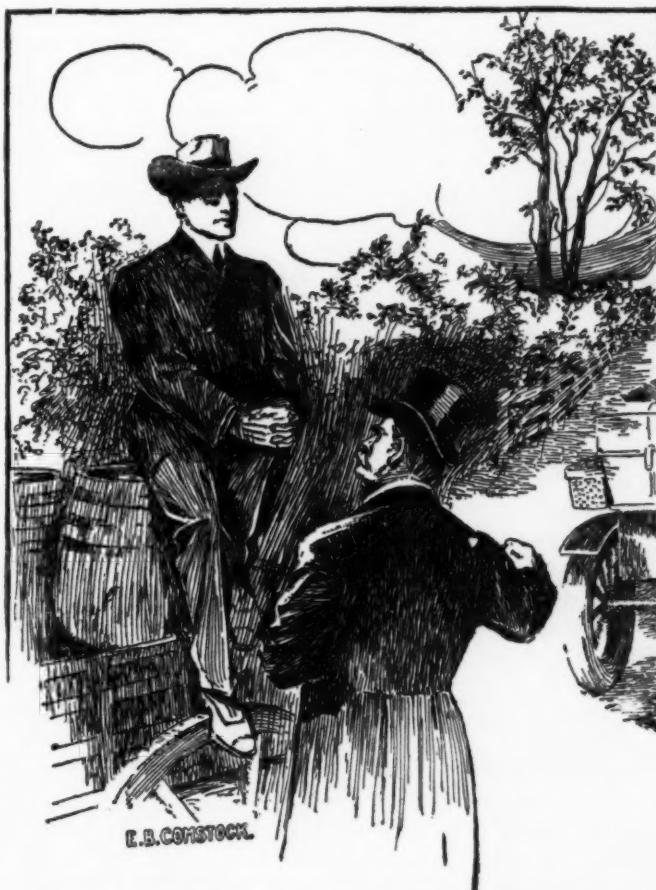
"Yes, you—Rollins!" cried Mr. Roxham.

"How de do?" smiled that individual, amiably.

"Such a mess!" bubbled the elder gentleman. "Got a telegram that our board of directors meets to-day instead of to-morrow. Got to be there—simply must be there. Means

a hundred thousand to me! No train for two hours, and now this cursed thing has stopped in its tracks!"

"Too bad," said young Mr. Rollins, sympathetically, his own rage somewhat cooled by the other's frenzy.



"See here, Rollins, this is no time for funny business."

"Bad! It's the very devil! Why, I wouldn't miss that meeting—I—I'd almost rather lose a hand! And now I'm stuck here! Stuck in this confounded hole for a dollar's worth of gasoline!"

"Gasoline!" repeated Rollins, pricking up his ears.

"Yes. This French idiot let it run out—didn't tell me till last night—ordered it by wire, but it can't possibly get here before evening. But, Lord! I supposed we had enough to get to the city. Hang this thing of having a country house! Blast automobiles!" concluded Mr. Roxham, pausing for breath.

"It is irritating," agreed the young man, regarding with a faint, enigmatic smile the person who had declined to become his father-in-law.

"Irritating!" snapped Roxham, yanking out his watch. "We could do it even now and have a good ten minutes to spare. But—bah!"

"Yes, it is a shame," said Rollins calmly.

"Well, it's—why, Rollins!" cried Mr. Roxham. "Those barrels! What—what are they?"

He sped to the rear of the wagon and scrutinized the brands with suspended breath. Then a smile of celestial happiness and unbounded relief suffused his flushed countenance and he said:

"Gasoline! Why on earth didn't you say so? Rollins, you've saved me a cool hundred thousand dollars! Positively, you have."

"Yes?"

"Yes, sir. Every cent of it. Thank the Lord! Here, Renaud!"

The chauffeur stepped to his side.

"Get hold here," commanded Mr. Roxham. "Mr. Rollins is going to lend me a barrel of gasoline. Send it back to-morrow morning, Rollins. Here, I'll give you a hand on this end of the barrel. Ready?"

"Yes," replied the Frenchman, seizing his end.

"Er—say, Mr. Roxham," drawled Rollins.

"Eh? What?"

"Just a minute."

Rollins stepped over the barrels to

the rear of the wagon. Having reached the last one—the blessed salvation of Mr. Roxham—he seated himself placidly thereupon and smiled down upon the elder man.

"See here, Rollins," cried the latter impatiently, "this is no time for funny business. I'll—"

"I hardly know, Mr. Roxham," said Rollins, picking his words, "really, I hardly know whether to let you have that barrel."

"Why—not?"

"Well, there are a number of reasons. Primarily—"

"Confound your reasons, sir! Let them rest for the present. I want that—"

"Oh, you'd better hear them," smiled Rollins, bracing his feet on the tailboard of the wagon to fend off a possible assault on the gasoline barrel.

"See here!" sputtered Mr. Roxham. "Whatever they are—I'll give you a hundred dollars for that stuff!"

"Couldn't think of it."

"What?"

"You see, just now this barrel is really worth more to you than—"

"Here! I'll make it a thousand—on the spot!"

"Oh, dear, no."

"But, hang it, sir! Think what it means to me! I must—I simply must get to the city!"

"So you said, Mr. Roxham."

"Then why—why—why under the sun don't you get off that barrel?" cried the poor gentleman helplessly. "Are you insane, Rollins?"

"Not at all," said the younger man complacently. "But, as I said, there are reasons. Now, why not discuss them calmly?"

"Go on! Go on!" grunted Roxham, snapping the case of his watch nervously as he watched the seconds flit away.

"That's better. You strenuous

business men, Mr. Roxham, when you have secured control of an article call it a corner, do you not?"

"Yes, yes, of course. What of it?"

"And in getting a corner, a man must be keen to see an opening and to take advantage of it, and having taken the advantage, to hold it, mustn't he?"

"Naturally," replied Roxham, wondering vaguely at the familiarity of the words. "But have done with this, Rollins. Come down to your infernal reasons."

"Now I," continued the younger man, "might be said to have a corner on the supply of gasoline in this region. Eh?"

"Yes, yes. I see what you're driving at. It's not at all what I should have expected of you—but you have your advantage, sir. I'll give you ten thousand dollars for your cursed barrel! Now get off!"

"No. Oh, no," replied Rollins, decidedly.

"Rollins!" cried Mr. Roxham, his voice rising to an agonized shriek. "I can still do it and have three minutes to spare. For heaven's sake, give me the stuff!"

"All right. Give me Lucile," said the other crisply.

"I—I—what, sir! I won't do it!"

"Drive on, Jenkins," said Rollins.

"Wait! Wait!" shouted Roxham. "Stop! I—I—will you give me the stuff at once if I say yes?"

"Certainly."

"Then—blast it! Yes!"

"Thanks," smiled Mr. Rollins. "Here's an old envelope. Just write 'Mr. John Rollins: I withdraw all opposition to your marriage with my daughter Lucile,' please."

Breathing hard, Roxham wrote.

"And now sign it."

Roxham affixed his signature.

"Thank you," said Rollins once more, springing to the ground. "Just give them a hand with this barrel, Jenkins."

Renaud produced a funnel. Roxham and the groom staggered across the road with the barrel of gasoline. Rollins stepped lightly into the clouds and executed a few lively steps on a particularly bright one.

Possibly two minutes later the little Frenchman climbed to his seat and pulled spasmodically at numerous levers, an operation which was succeeded by a hollow coughing beneath the machine.

"Aha! It is well!" he cried, emotionally. "*Vive le M'sieur Rollins!*"

"The devil take M'sieur Rollins!" replied his employer, plumping into the cushions of the rear seat. "Go on! Go on!"

Then, noticing the smiling face of his prospective son-in-law, he added caustically:

"You seem pleased, young man. I'm glad that you see the joke. I don't!"

"I know you don't, papa," responded Rollins, trotting along beside the automobile, as it gathered speed. "But you will when you pass the station. Look on the freight platform. Your ten barrels of gasoline are there—came this morning. You see, papa, that was where I was keen enough to see—"

The big car shot beyond the reach of his voice. But the backward turned, purple countenance of Mr. Roxham, working convulsively, told that he had heard; and Rollins returned to his box-wagon filled with the happy consciousness of a good job, well done.

"Home—quick!" he said to the groom. "I have a call to make before lunch."



## Kenton's Own

BY D. H. TALMADGE

A thundering battle was fought one day in a certain state of the Middle West—thundering though the thunder was silent, for the silence was of the sort that crashes upon the nerves. When the night came down and the losses and gains were counted it was found that once more in the world's history the stronger had lost the fight. And there arose a great cry of rejoicing and sorrow mingled—a harsh, discordant sound, for the heart-strings of the victors had been tuned in the key of disappointment and those of the defeated had been set to the note of triumph.

In the state headquarters of what had been considered the dominant party strong men conducted themselves like children. In the agitation of the moment tears trickled from eyes that had remained dry in view of life's greatest griefs; voices that had rolled from the platform at a hundred meetings, wavering not nor hesitating, trembled and squeaked; profanity dropped from the lips of those who abhorred it; rage held mastery in breasts where it had been the most abject of slaves.

Wentworth, the chairman, sat with his arms outstretched on the table, his chin resting upon his breast, his gaze riveted to a tally-sheet, and gnawed his under lip. He had been in this position fully a half hour when Gilman entered the room and recalled him to himself. Gilman was the defeated candidate for secretary of state.

"Old man"—he seated himself at the table and grasped one of the chairman's hands—"how in the deuce did it happen?"

The chairman drew a long, ragged breath and shook his head. "It looked like a cinch yesterday," he said hollowly. "Something went wrong in the sixteenth district; that's all I know to-night."

"The sixteenth! Why man, that's Kenton's own!"

"Exactly, Kenton's own, and nothing could go wrong there without his knowing it. He must have known it. Rebellions aren't hatched in a minute. And if he knew it why in—why didn't he say so? That's what puzzles me more than anything else. There's the figures; look 'em over." He pushed the sheet across the table and arose, lighting a cigar nervously. "I'm going," he said. "Good-night, boys." And from the place which he had entered that evening with the firm, springy step of confidence he departed sullenly, dragging his feet.

They listlessly watched him go, the warriors gathered there, who for weeks had been waging the fight for victory on this day. They said little, for they had nothing to say, and they were weary to the last cells of their bodies. They would not have felt this weariness as a burden had the fight been won, but it was of crushing weight with the fight lost, and they collapsed under it. Every strong man has two natures; the one merits and assumes responsibility,

while the other merely keeps house in a doddering way when the first is unfit for duty.

Gilman sat for ten minutes doggedly going over the figures. He was a new man in the game, had put a small barrel of cash into it and was loth to give up. But he found no consolation in the sheet; the defeat seemed decisive. He leaned back in his chair and groaned. Then to his side came Bannigan, old with the work of eight continuous weeks in the field—forty-two speeches had Bannigan made in that time, and every one a marvel. He smiled sadly as he patted Gilman upon the shoulder.

"Thud!" he croaked huskily. "It's the fortune of war, me boy."

Gilman returned the smile grotesquely. "What did it?" he asked. "Wentworth said something about the sixteenth district. What do you know, Bannigan?"

"Nothing. Things seemed all right when I was up there last week. What did Wentworth say?"

"Not much. I thought he hinted at conspiracy, with Kenton as the archvillain, but that seems ridiculous. I was going to insist on an explanation, but he scuttled away before I got around to it; acted as if he was afraid he'd say something."

"H-m-m-m." Bannigan's red-rimmed eyes closed slowly. When they opened again they were directed at the door. "Poor old Wentworth," he said; "he's done up like the rest of us; doesn't know precisely what he's about. I'm all but dead myself. See you later, Gilman." And he also departed, leaving Gilman staring after him, surprised.

The clock struck two. At that hour in his office at the capitol, Kenton, governor of the state, defeated for re-election, received a telegram

which brought a peculiar expression to his face. It bore no signature, and simply said, "Dear old dad! Ticket all safe here but you." This telegram was still open in his hand, and he was sitting half turned away from his desk, his head resting upon the back of the chair, his eyes closed, when Wentworth and Bannigan were announced. He stood up to greet them.

It was not the hour for conventionalities. The three men were weary to the point of exasperation. No time was wasted in diplomatic preliminaries.

"Governor," began Wentworth bluntly, "we've come to find out what you know about the sixteenth district." His tone was that of one who governs, not of one who addresses a governor. "There's something rotten up there. Work has been going on against us for weeks; it couldn't have happened just today; and you know what it was and why it was and all the miserable rest of it. We want you to tell us. We've the right to know."

The governor's shoulders straightened. "I've not been at home for six weeks," he said coldly.

"Nevertheless, you know what it was." Wentworth's tone softened. "Come now, you can't fool us, Bill, any more than we can fool you. What's the use? The fight was close all over the state, but we'd have won out all right if your folks at home had done their duty. Why, blast it, Bill, they went like sheep, directly opposite to all precedent and their expressed convictions. Bannigan was up there only last week. Things were as usual then—or seemed to be so. Thompson and Folger and Elliott and all the rest of 'em assured him that 'twas to be the same good old story. I believe they thought so, too, but you, Bill—

you know better. When nine counties upset all at once there's a reason for it. One county might have a fool impulse and go astray, but not nine. We never worried an instant about the sixteenth. It's your district. You were responsible for it, and you let it go wrong and—and said nothing. O, Bill, Bill!"

The chairman's eyes suddenly filled with tears and his voice became almost uncontrollable.

"Tell us, Bill," threatened Bannigan raspingly. "If you don't we'll find out, that's all. It's terrible to be licked like this and not know why!" He passed a shaking hand across his forehead and moistened his dry lips with his tongue.

"Sit down," said the governor, after a moment of indecision. "I'll do the best I can. It isn't much. I'm no more responsible for the landslide in the sixteenth than you are, but"—he paused while the two men drew chairs close to his—"I did know there was something doing up there, and I was not surprised when the returns came in to-night."

Wentworth's mouth contorted, but no words came. He motioned with his hand for the governor to continue.

"I said nothing of what I knew, because it would have done no good to—"

Bannigan writhed. "You lie!" he whispered.

The governor's hands clenched and his neck stiffened; otherwise he gave no heed to the insult.

"It would have done no good," he repeated, "to have done so. The conditions were quite beyond our control; an attempt to control them would have been useless and"—he groped for the word—"undesirable. You know Jack Stewart, who was today elected to succeed me here, but you do not know him as I know him.

Twenty years ago he was a boy in Brownsville, my home. He lived there for fifteen years, then moved to Darry City, down in the seventh district, where he now lives. We liked him in Brownsville; he was such a wide-awake, honest, good-natured, helpful sort of a boy we couldn't help it. He took up book-canvassing to help him through school and made a success of it. Later he assumed the district agency for an insurance company and made a success of that also. In the course of seven or eight years he became acquainted with practically every man in the nine counties, and not only with every man but with every woman and a large percentage of the children. He sat up nights with some of 'em when they were sick—as near as I can ascertain he did this for at least four people in every county—just happened in when he was needed, you know. He sent the children picture cards and other little remembrances that cost him nothing but a bit of trouble. He remembered people's hobbies and sent 'em newspaper clippings bearing thereon. And he did a thousand and one other things all in a purely disinterested and charming way while pursuing the course of business. The results naturally were—well, they were in his favor."

"Yes," groaned Wentworth, "but if we had known that he was making a still hunt among his friends up there we might have—"

"We could have done nothing. He had the start of us by ten years, Wentworth. For six weeks he has done nothing but renew old acquaintances in my district. His party had a good platform—the first in years, and he grasped the chance he had been waiting for. He had a hot tussle for the nomination, but he got it; it's his way. He cal-

culated that the issues would cut down our majorities throughout the state, and they did. He bent all his energy towards getting an avalanche of votes in the sixteenth; he figured that such a vote there would elect him, and he was right. It was beautifully done. You noticed that not a political meeting was held in that district by his party, and you thought it was a cinch—that they had given up the district in the beginning. So did I until I went home six weeks ago. While I was at home I saw Stewart a number of times. He was—er—he is, in fact, engaged to marry my daughter. They were children together. I haven't a thing against him except his politics."

"We knew he was going with the girl," growled Bannigan; "we thought—confound him!—that was what he was hanging so close to the district for. We laughed at him for a soft mark—blast our fool heads!"

"Yes?" The governor laughed somewhat sorrowfully. "I imagine that was part of the plan. I tried to induce the girl to come down here with me till after election; she'd always been crazy to come heretofore; but she wouldn't listen to it. And look here—after I'd tumbled to Stewart's game I told my wife that I was going to get out into the district myself, chief-executive dignity and all, and I meant it. She must have told the girl, although it may have been a coincidence; I don't like to think that my family plotted against me. That night Stewart called on me. We had a pleasant little confab without touching on politics for an hour. Then he got up to go, walked as far as the door, turned and busted my plan as gently as a mother soothes her babe.

"'O, governor,' said he in the old, bubbling, boyish way, 'I nearly forgot what I came for.' He drew a

note-book from his pocket and rapidly ran over the leaves with his forefinger. Pretty soon he found what he was looking for. 'Do you remember,' said he, 'a conversation you and I had one day in your office eight years ago when you were running for senator?' I had forgotten it, but I recollect it when he mentioned the circumstances. I had merely asked him to vote for me. 'What's my vote worth to you?' he had asked, laughing at the time-worn pleasantry. 'What's your price?' I asked, wishing to keep him in good humor. 'Well,' said he, suddenly sober—I thought at the time his soberness was assumed, but I guess it wasn't—'I'll tell you; if I am ever a candidate for governor of this state I want you to promise not to turn your hand over against me in this district.' And I promised, and now he held me to it.

"By George! I couldn't get a long breath for an hour! Talk about long heads! I'm no baby. I didn't try to squirm out of it because it was a joke. I couldn't, don't you see? He'd voted for me. I believe that's all, boys. I'm sorry. Perhaps the situation isn't so bad as it appears to-night. I've just had word that all the ticket excepting myself carries Brown county. It is probable the entire district goes the same way. Isn't it possible that Gilman and the rest will pull through?"

An expression of hope rippled over Wentworth's face. "We had got only the head of the ticket before I left," he said with a sound not unlike a sob. "They never split on the state before, but new things are always happening. If your district elects us, the chances are in our favor. We'll have the legislature and the departments. That's good enough." Then impulsively he bent forward and shoved his hand into

that of the governor. "Bill," he said brokenly, "I don't blame you. I see it. You're all right—you're all—right."

"Bill," blubbered Bannigan, clutching the governor's other hand, "you're great. G-good-night, Bill—old fellow."

At four o'clock Wentworth and Bannigan, haggard and jaded, returned to headquarters. Gilman was still there, but his attitude had changed; he was stepping jauntily about the room like a man rejuvenated.

"I'm elected," he cried. "Haven't you heard? Nobody's beaten but

Kenton. Poor old Kenton! He must have made a mistake somehow."

"Don't you believe it, my son," said Wentworth, glancing over the latest returns. "Somebody else made the mistake. The scheme to force another term on the old man in order to put him out of another race didn't work. He'll be elected to the United States Senate next winter; we couldn't prevent it now even if we wanted to."

"Which, under the circumstances, I reckon, we don't," drawled Bannigan hoarsely, holding up his thumbs in token of helplessness.

## A Friend to the Unsuccessful

BY ETHEL SHACKELFORD

"There is the Statue of Liberty!" exclaimed the Artist as the liner was slowly making her way up the harbor.

"And there is the Custom House!" exclaimed the Singer.

"That's so, you have a lot of old silver. But I shall have no trouble! There will be no duty on my clothes, because the officer will mistake them for rags stuffed in the trunk to keep my paint brushes from rattling. I pulled out of this harbor three years ago in the same dress I am wearing now."

The Singer was touched by the cheerfulness and fortitude of this acquaintance she had made on the steamer. The Artist had worked hard in Paris, lived poorly and accomplished much. The Singer, on the contrary, had worked now and then, lived well and accomplished little. A rich cousin had given her two years abroad, and now that they were gone and the Singer was obliged to pro-

vide for herself, she was beginning to realize that she was not prepared for the struggle.

The Custom House officer made a superficial examination of the Singer's trunk and chalked it off. Joining her acquaintance, she saw that the unfortunate girl's "rags" had been turned right out onto the floor, and the officer was insisting that he had no way of knowing the pictures were her own work.

"Can't you see that I am an artist?" asked the distressed girl. "Can't you see my brushes and sketch books?"

"You may have put them in as a blind," replied the man insolently. "Did you paint all of these pictures—did you paint *this* one?"

"No. That is the only thing I bought during my two years' stay in Europe. I paid twenty-five dollars for it, and I am allowed to bring in a hundred dollars' worth of things without duty."

"Only clothes," replied the man curtly, and he left the two women, taking the picture with him.

"This is an outrage!" exclaimed the Artist. "I have no money to pay duty with, and if they confiscate this picture, it will break my heart. I went without things I needed for weeks to buy the portrait, because the dear thing has eyes that understand. It was the work of an American boy who came down with typhoid fever in the Quarter. When they let him out of the hospital, he painted this portrait of the nun who nursed him. He did the picture in a day and he called it 'A Friend to the Unsuccessful.' The boy was not strong enough to work as he did that day, and some friend who dropped in to see him that night found him raving, and three days later he died. He left his soul in that picture."

It was only when the Artist's eyes filled with tears that the Singer could find her tongue. "There, there, don't cry," she said softly. "I did not give quite all I had to that grand stewardess we had, and I will pay the duty."

"There's fifteen dollars on this thing," said the officer approaching them.

"But it only cost twenty-five!"

"Fifteen dollars duty according to our valuation, and it will be held for that."

The Singer paid the man, being careful not to let the other woman see that she left but one bill in her purse. The Artist looked at her belongings which lay about on the floor. Her shabby clothes were a pathetic sight, shamelessly thrown out to be seen by passers-by, and she was hurt. "You have been awfully nice," she ventured.

"Not at all!"

"It would really be a relief to tell you how things stand with me," the

Artist began "You see, you have been a friend to the unsuccessful, yourself—you understand."

The Singer was a little embarrassed, but the Artist spared her a reply by going on. "The truth is, I haven't enough money to get home, and I don't know a soul in New York. This is another reason for my being so upset when that man proposed confiscating the only thing I have which is of any value. I am a teacher of drawing and design, so of course my own things are no good! But I can sell the nun to a New York dealer and get at least the ten dollars I need to make up the amount for my ticket, and I shall not mind about meals—I am used to that sort of thing—you understand?"

"I can lend you ten dollars," said the Singer.

"You are so sweet! But I can't borrow money because I could not sleep if I owed any one anything, and heaven only knows when I could repay you. But—but won't you take the portrait? You will then be paying just what I did for it."

This was a hard thing for the Singer to do, but she was convinced that it was the only way the Artist would let her help her, so she made a place for it in her trunk which had not yet been taken from the pier.

"I shall take good care of her," said the Singer simply, "and now, good-bye! It has been an inspiration to know you, and if you will let me, I should like to tell you that I think you are a brick. You will be successful, I know. Good luck!"

And the two young women, who had been such good companions the few days on the boat, parted ways.

The Singer was perplexed. She had had her trunk sent to the station, and she was unconsciously starting for the same place—but

why? She had less than a dollar, and that would not buy a ticket to Boston. She was besieged with men calling, "Cab, lady? Cab, cab?" and little boys who ran after her, saying persistently, "Carry your bag and rugs, lady? Five cents, lady?"

"Will you stop nagging me?" she demanded of the urchin nearest her elbow.

"No, lady," he replied with a grin.

"Very well, then," she said good-naturedly, "take these things."

"Where to, lady?"

"To the nearest pawn shop."

The Singer sat gazing at her piano. The landlady had reminded her, as she came in very tired, that her rent was several days overdue. The girl had sung to an organist that morning with the hope of a choir position, but she had met with the usual rebuff, "There is really no chance for a small contralto voice, especially a half-trained one." The words said themselves over and over to the girl, like a weird refrain. "I suppose something must be done," she said aloud to herself. Then she stared again at the piano. She had had no luncheon and her breakfast had consisted of a cup of tea she made in her room, so she was too faint to feel anything very keenly. She was impersonal with herself, as it were.

"I ought to have worked," she mused; "that's what I should have done—worked. I kept my voice limber singing to a lot of silly people who told me that I had a great future before me, and I went to my lessons—I did everything but work. I'm a fakir—a fakir like the man who stands on the corner and tells a crowd of loafers that every tenth package of soap has a dollar tucked inside its wrapper. A fakir, suggesting much, back of which there is nothing—nothing. Three lessons a

week costing anywhere from five to ten dollars a lesson—two years—and in the end I can't read at sight, can't breathe properly, can't play a decent accompaniment, can't—" But here the girl's energy failed her.

A sharp knock at the door.

"We have an order to get the piano that's in this room," said one of the three men who confronted the girl.

"Very well," she said.

This forced the girl out of her dreams, and when the men had gone, she looked over her things for something she could pawn or sell, but her stock was very low, for most of the trinkets she had got abroad were long since gone. Suddenly her eye sought the face of "Sister Angelica," as she called the nun. "You are all I have now," she said. "Sister, you know how hard it would be to part with you, don't you? Yet it has been a temptation sometimes. If it were not for that other girl, I might have done it, Sister Angelica—I—I might even be coward enough now!"

The sad lines of the nun's face seemed to the sensitive, overwrought girl, to deepen. "Forgive me, Sister!" she whispered as she touched the canvas reverentially.

An hour later the Singer was awakened from a heavy, sickish sleep by some one gently smoothing back her hair.

"Wake up, you great lazy thing!" said the new comer pleasantly. "I almost pounded your door in and finally tried the knob."

"Oh hello, Caro!" said the Singer sitting up. "I hope you haven't come to beg for that picture again."

"Well, that is a cordial welcome," retorted the woman. "You are right, nevertheless. Mrs. Nichols is determined to have Sister Angelica over the mantel in her room, and

she has not stopped harping on the subject since that afternoon I brought her here to tea. She told me to-day that she would give seventy-five dollars for the picture. Now do be sensible and sell it, and stop clinging to that foolish notion that you want to give it back to the artist girl. You never can find her in the world, and there is no reason why you should give her the picture anyway."

"I know it was careless to leave her without getting her address, but she has my card, you know, and she may write to me some day."

"If she were going to write you, she would have done it a year ago."

"I may find her yet. She lives a few hundred miles out of Chicago, and I think the name of the town begins with K. I must find her, Caro—I must. I tell you she starved herself to get that picture, and it means everything to her!"

"You are crazy—simply crazy, and you are wasting time and stamps."

No matter how fierce the struggle for existence, the Singer never gave up her hope of finding her artist acquaintance. Now she was working on a new line. She remembered that a Boston man had come home on the same ship with them, and that he and the Artist were often together about the decks. He had decided to return very suddenly and his name was not on the passenger list. The girl had looked for him every time she had left the house for weeks, but finally that idea wore itself out and she forgot to search for the face.

One evening as the Singer took her place in the choir stalls of the church, where at last she had got a petty position, she saw this man sitting in the first pew. After service, she hurried out into the church and caught the man as he was leaving.

It was evident that he had no remembrance of her, but she soon made him recall the Artist.

"I am sorry I cannot help you find your friend," he said, "but all I remember of what she told me of her native village is that the only excitement there was an occasional fire, and that its name had an Indian sound."

The Singer went home heavy hearted. It seemed a shame that her last hope had come to nothing, and as was her custom, she looked up to Sister Angelica for comfort. "I must find her, Sister, I must find her. She needs you, I know." The girl looked into the nun's eyes, and lo! an inspiration came to her.

The next morning she hunted up a telegraph directory and searched for a town in Illinois which began with K and sounded Indian. When she came to Kewanee, she stopped short. "That has a familiar sound!" she exclaimed to the surprise of the telegraph operator. Hurrying home, she wrote her friend a sweet, cordial letter, saying she would like to give her back the portrait of dear Sister Angelica. She was as pleased as a child, for she felt sure this was the town, and of course the letter would be forwarded to the Artist, no matter where she was now. "She will be so happy, Sister," said the girl to the picture.

A week—two weeks, and no reply.

Three weeks—a month. Then the Singer wrote again. Again a month—two months, and no answer.

The Singer was practicing with a pitch-pipe instead of a piano, a thing which wore upon her greatly. The effort to establish herself in an over-crowded profession in a city where the musical standard is so high, was bad enough, but added to this, the Singer was living in an unheated room and having insufficient

food. Small wonder it was that she was moody and depressed. She sat reading a note from Mrs. Nichols, who offered her one hundred dollars for the portrait of the nun, and asked her for a final and immediate reply.

"Sister?" said the girl, looking up at the Friend to the Unsuccessful, "Sister, how can I—how can I? You know I would rather starve than accept money for you. You know how faithfully I have tried to find the girl who has the first right to your friendship. It would be hard enough to give you up, even for her, but for *money!* Sister? You understand what makes my voice grow thinner and thinner—you and you only, do not blame me for refusing to visit my friends when I need their food. How can I give you up—how can I—how can I?"

Rising from her couch an hour later, her face white, tear-stained and resolute, the Singer took the portrait down from the wall, and as though she were performing some tender and last offices for the dead, she put Sister Angelica in a box which she wrapped and corded. Going to the table for a pen to address the box to Mrs. Nichols, she caught sight of a letter she had brought upstairs herself, but had forgotten to open. It was a strange hand and post-marked somewhere in Pennsylvania. She opened the envelope automatically, and turning to the signature, she gave a queer little exclamation, and eagerly read the lines.

"So awfully nice of you to look me up," the letter ran. "Your first

letter came at rather a busy time, but I really have no excuse for neglecting the second letter so long. Do forgive me. You know how one puts off writing. I am sure you will be interested to know that I am the Superintendent of Drawing in the public schools here, and besides, I have done very well with my designs, so I am no longer the forlorn creature you met on the ship. I remember the oil you refer to. It is a nice bit of color and feeling. I shall be glad to have it as a souvenir of our voyage. Send by express to the above address. Hope you are enjoying life and have met with success. Let's see, was it voice or piano you were going in for? With many thanks, believe me, sincerely yours."

Minute after minute the Singer stood motionless. This, then, was all the Artist really cared! This was what the Singer had struggled to do! This was what she had mistaken for a deep nature! This—this—was all that lay back of her sentiment!

At last the Singer took her pen and wrote the Artist's name and address on the box, saying brokenly as she did so, "Good-bye, Sister Angelica! You have been my Hope, my Courage, my Inspiration, my Ambition—my Friend—and you always shall be! But you must go to the other girl now, because I have promised you, and because the Successful need such a friend as you quite as much as the Unsuccessful—sometimes they need a friend even more than we. Good-bye, sweet Sister Angelica—good-bye!"

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# THE WHITE PAPPOOSE.

BY IZOLA FORRESTER.

After you have traveled for days over the rolling, barren hills beyond Camp Fever, and are ready to shake hands comradely with death rather than face another day, there is a shimmer in the sunlight, and Lake Kippekinong lies at your feet, with the Isle of the White Pappoose, long, and green with pines, in the distance.

No white man had seen either until MacNeill Ross, Red Ross they called him at the camp, went over the hills one year and brought back such a load of pelts as had not been seen at Cardenac since the old days when Irish Louis traded jack knives for silver fox pelts up in the Sac country.

But Ross was a square trader, and stood well with the Indians. He never closed a deal that would prevent his return the next year, so for two years he made the trip northward, and each spring came back safely with his rich pelts and his stories of the new trail. Never a word, though, did he say of the lake or the island, or the tribe he had found, or the way to it all, and his reticence annoyed Irish Louis.

Take plain French blood and temper it with Indian—it makes a mighty uncertain mixture. But if you throw in a dash of pure Irish besides, and let it mellow in the snowlands for a generation, the devil himself couldn't fight it with credit.

Irish Louis was tall and slim as a peeled willow wand. He was old and looked young. He was a sinner, and had a smile like Saint Cecilia's. He could keep his lips shut

tight under that smile for weeks, like his Indian grandmother, or he could sing and talk your heart away all night like his County Sligo father, but he couldn't make Red Ross nor any other man, white or red, call him friend.

The third fall came, and Ross went north. A day later, Irish Louis left camp with his lips shut and smiling, and those who watched said he took the Scotchman's trail. That was in November, before the big snows came, and the truth was not all known until the thin ice was melting over the moose tracks in the swamps the next April. Then, one day, what was left of Red Ross stumbled into camp, gaunt and crazed and ragged, and he carried the white pappoose in his arms. It was a mite of a kid, wrapped close in soft furry clothes, with a woman's love story worked into them in the bright beads.

"You treat it right," Ross said. "It's no Injun. It's my own flesh and blood, and it's taken my life to get it here alive."

So we handed it over to Davy Allen's wife, and she laid it beside her own with a blessing and a bottle of warm milk, and mothered it.

It never got well acquainted with its father, but before he took the unknown trail that leads to the stars, Ross told us how it had happened, so that none would watch for the return of Irish Louis.

All the way north he had traveled, not knowing of his shadow a day's journey behind. He had not lingered. It is a long while from April to November, and eyes watched for

his coming on the island that was green with its pines even in midwinter. They were beautiful eyes. The papoose had them, and they were soft and brown as sealskin.

Awina was the name, Ross said. She was a sister of the chief, White Owl. He had landed on the shores of the lake half dead, the first year, and had been treated well by the new tribe. White Owl was young, and open to trade arguments, and Ross made a treaty with him. Every year he would come and trade fairly for the pelts, but he would carry no news of the island back with him to the land of the white hunters. One trader did no particular harm, but if dozens came, and on their trail trappers, there would be nothing left for the Indians. It was a good treaty, and before Ross left in the spring the chief called him brother and Awina was his wife in his own tepee.

She was only fifteen, he said. A slender, shy girl with the boy-like strength and grace of limb that you find in the tribes up there when the girls are young. It goes when the lissome forms are burdened and the muscles toil-hardened, but when they are young and the eyes are like Awina's a man returns the second year, as Ross did.

It was then he found the child, new born, and white as if it had been a bairn from his own Glenarchy in the Highlands, and its tiny hands were locks of steel to hold him to his faith. To Awina and her people, the child was a small wise spirit who had come to them strangely in the flesh, as gods come, but with the mystery of all the ages in its eyes. Some day he would be a great chief, White Owl said, but the mother looked at Ross, strong, and broad, and fair skinned, and she knew in her heart the child would go from her to its own kind when it was grown, and that he would wish it so, and she was content.

It was a happy life. When spring came, Ross was slow to leave. The boy could almost stand alone, and the buds were swelling along the lake shores and there was peace and love and plenty on the island, but he had started back at last. It was the call of the white blood. Each to his own land and people. The heart never forgets the

voice of its own race, and Ross hungered for the south.

It would be his last trip he told Awina and the chief. When the maple leaves turned gold and the wild ducks flew high and straight to the south lands, he would come back



"He was a sinner."

for good and live out his days on the long, green island. But the days had passed, and the wild ducks gone long ago and the maple leaves lay withered under the snow before the eyes that watched saw a figure on the far shore. And when she had gone proudly to welcome it, it was a stranger, a tall, smiling stranger, with Irish blue eyes, who rode back to the island in the chief's canoe.

He was a friend of Ross, their brother, he told the tribe in council that night; a great friend, so great that Ross had told him of his trading in the new country and of the way hither, and had handed over his part in it to him.

"He comes no more?" asked White Owl, calmly, watching a shadow that stood still among the moving shadows from the firelight near the door.

Irish Louis laughed and raised his shoulders with the airy nonchalance of his grandfather, P'tit François, gentleman of France, vagabond of the camps from Mount Royal to the Red River.

Who could say? Ross might return, some day, maybe, perhaps. Just now he was busy. There was a new wife. The chief knew when a man had a new wife, devil a bit could you coax him out alone to brave the frozen trail. And she was young and sweet to look on, the new wife.

The chief was silent, but he watched the shadows, and the one that had stood still was gone.

It was the winning way of Irish Louis that carried him through, Ross told us. It gained him the friendship of White Owl and the rest of the tribe, and the winter's trade was turned over to him; but there was no welcome in Awina's eyes when he smiled her way. The name of one Ross was held accursed. He had broken faith, faith with his brothers, and faith with wife and child, and after the first month White Owl pledged his word to Irish Louis that as he held the honors of the lost one, so, if he desired, should he claim his tepee and his wife, that the new ties might be drawn close and his home be among them.

They hold feasts up yonder at their marriages, solemn, lonely, fateful feasts, without joy. All day the eating goes on, and at night the great bonfires of pine knots flame up from point to point

on the island and throw long, genii shapes of fire quivering on the dark lake waters.

That night they were beacons. Ross laughed, with crazed, fever-brightened eyes, as he pulled himself up among his blankets and told how he had swam from shore to shore in the dancing glow of those fires, how



"Awina was his wife."



"With the child in his arms, Ross had gone into the firelight."

he had stolen to the one spot on the island where he had a right to be, the tepee of Awina. And he had found her there on the deerskins, the little white papoose asleep in her arms, and a knife deep in her breast.

And while he looked, another had come, Irish Louis, joyous and drunk, seeking his bride and finding only

death and the man he had left for dead out in the wilderness.

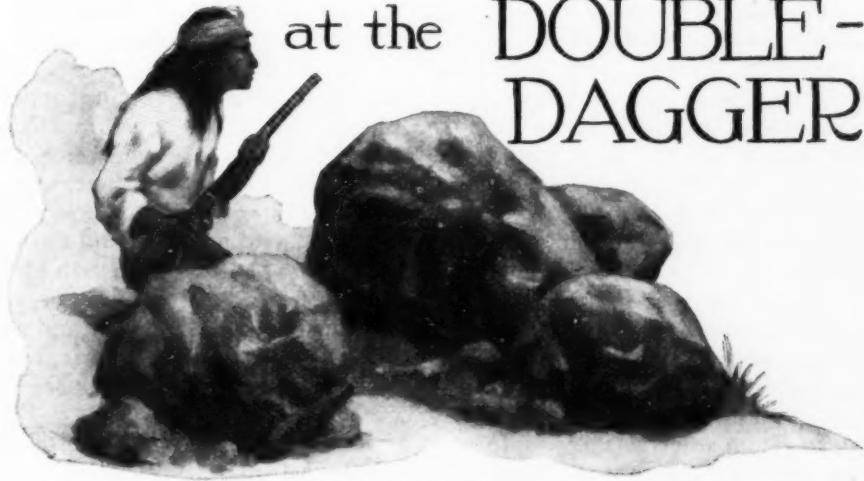
They had fought, Ross said, there in the tepee beside her still face and out in the open, gripping and rolling over and over like panthers on the dry pine needles, until they had reached the edge of the lake, and the body of Irish Louis sank down into the deep, still water, with a clean, righteous stab in its heart.

With the child in his arms, Ross had gone in the midst of the firelight dancers and told his story simply, of the treachery and his struggle for life in the wilderness of the hills, of the two dead, one in honor by her own hand and the other in the lake, as one's enemy should die. Not a hand had been raised against him when he departed, but they had called him brother again, and there was no broken faith.

We buried him in the little mission graveyard down at Cardenac, but the

child with the seal brown eyes lived. Gone, now. Drifted away as they all drift, somewhere west, and they call him Ross Junior out there, but over beyond the hills and the wilderness, there is the still, dark lake where Irish Louis lies, and the long green island that the Indians call the Isle of the White Papoose.

# AN EXPERIMENT at the DOUBLE-DAGGER



By John H. Whitson.

"There are two things that no livin' man can understand," said Gleason, our foreman, striking a match for his cigarette. "One of 'em is what a woman will do at any certain p'tickler time, and t'other is what kind of ideas are hatching in the brain-pan of an Injun. You may think that you know both the woman and the Injun, but you don't, and you never do."

We were all in the big bunk room, at home, at McCaffrey's. It was comfortable to be there, more than I can say, with the saddles and spurs, the bridles and quirts, slickers and chaps and other things, hanging up neat on the wooden wall pins, and the bunks all ready for us when we got tired enough to turn in.

"The Injun I'm going to tell you about was a San Carlos Apache; and the woman—well, she was an angel! The San Carlos blew in at Carter's ranch, the Double Dagger, on the Encinita, full of that Mexican fire-water they call *aguardiente*. He was red for murder; so Carter rapped him hard and prompt on the head

with a revolver butt, and chucked him into a bunk room to cool off, with the key turned on him.

"Young Carter's wife came out to take a look at the 'Pache, when the *aguardiente* had worked out of him and his head begun to heal; and she took pity on him, and begged her husband to let him out of the bunk room, which did seem a good deal like a jail, seeing that he had been locked in there nigh a week.

"So he comes out, plenty meek I tell you, with his legs wabbling from the long confinement and the effect of the drunk; and Carter set him out some good grub, and Mrs. Carter rustled him some old clothes which had been Carter's, for the 'Pache was a sort of cross betwixt old Adam and a last year's scarecrow for raiment.

"I was there at the time. It sort of up-ended my stomach, to see a greasy ki-oodler like that eating good chuck and wearing store clothes; but I didn't say anything, and none of the boys did. Carter wouldn't stood for it himself, only

for the sake of pleasing his wife; we knew that. Whatever she said, went, with Carter; and generally with the rest of us. She had queer ideas about a good many things. She was from the East, and these Eastern people ain't practical—they've got too many feelings and tender sentiments of one kind and another.

"Well, after that she proceeded to treat the San Carlos as if he was a gentleman and a Christian; which, as you'll agree, is against all cowboy notions of common sense. Seems, from some scraps of information that loafed to me later, that she'd been bit by the ambition to become a missionary. She'd been educated in all kinds of books away up to high C, and she was tightening the diamond-hitches of her education [and getting ready to go into some far-off heathen country—Chiny, mebby—when young Carter rides into the education corral, casts his eye over that herd of likely females, picks her out, and promptly ropes her and takes her out to the ranch on the Encinita, spoiling all her missionary plans and leaving her with a lot of useless information and twisted ideas on her hands.

"With these twisted ideas and this suppressed education steaming in her mind, and she wondering if she had done the right thing to let the yellow heathen stumble on in his blindness while she enjoyed herself as the wife of a first-class American citizen, it ain't to be wondered that she looked on the coming of the San Carlos as providential. The heathen in his blindness had come to her.

"So she started a sort of Sunday-school there at the ranch house, for the benefit of Injun Joe, as we called the 'Pache. When the school was in session, little Tad Carter—that was her boy—was set up by her side, I

reckon as a sort of model for the 'Pache to glue his optics on.

"Of all the touching things in this world, it is innocence pure and simple that rakes in the jack-pot! And innocence was the word for them two—Mrs. Carter, with her eyes like stars, and her sweet lips pouring out goodness and wisdom, and faith and charity, to that scowlin' San Carlos, and little Tad setting by her, kicking his heels and talking and looking like a little angel, in his awfully clean clothes and with his yellow curls falling down his back.

"The San Carlos was certainly a whole lot more villainous looking than any 'Pache I ever met up with, and in my time I've met a few. You've seen a rattlesnake's eye glitter! Well, that was 'Pache Joe. Build a black, high-cheek-boned Injun face around a pair of them eyes, and you know how he looked as well as I do. With that face, we were ticketed not to like him from the start.

"Carter would never interfere with anything his wife set her heart on, but this Sunday-school business wasn't any more funny and cheering to him than it was to the cowboys. He spoke to me about it, out back of the corral one day.

"'Gleason,' he says, 'if anything happens, and I shouldn't be in any condition myself to make good, I can count on you to see that the devil don't get away?'

"You see, he was banking, like the rest of us, on the laws of nature, which provide that the poison in a snake's fangs has got to ooze out or overflow sooner or later; otherwise I reckon the snake would die from an over-accumulation of its own venom. I'm not saying that the snake is to blame; though we take it for granted that he is, and kill him. Nature, you've noticed, works the

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same way, whether it is storing up snake poison or honey for the tongue of the bee.

"'Carter,' I says, in answer to him, 'if that devil wabbles so much as a hand's breadth from the straight and narrow path he'd ought to walk in, seeing the way he is being treated, I'll short-off let such a shine of daylight through him that he'll never take another Sunday-school lesson.'

"'Thank you, Gleason,' he says, taking my hand; 'I knew I could depend on you.' And that was the last he ever said on the subject, until after the Apaches came, and the thing was over.

"It was some trouble or other about the beef rations, I don't know what, that caused the bucks at the Whitewater Agency to hit the war trail that time. They bolted for the hills, and came dancing down on the ranches and the settlements like a red sand cloud from the Calico Range. Old Iron Face was leading them; and Iron Face was a San Carlos, the same as 'Pache Joe.

"I had been up in the Encinita scrub looking for stray horses, when the news reached me from the ranches above. I thanked the fellow that brought it—'twas red-headed Jim Armstrong—and moved for home. War trail Injuns, mad at their agent and mixing hunger and hate in a sort of bilious blue pill, are horribly unfeeling in their treatment of whoever they meet. I didn't want them to meet me, and I knew I was needed at home; so I ambled. If I had been riding for a medal and it had been built of a size to agree with the speed of the winner, I'd have won it, and it would have looked like a cartwheel.

"When I arrived at the ranch Injun Joe was gone; the news of the raid hadn't got ahead of me, and what I had to tell set everything to

fluttering. You'd have thought, instead of being an Arizona ranch with men and cowboys, that the Double Dagger was a hen pen with a hawk big as a balloon floating over it. The reason was that Mrs. Carter and the kid were also gone; where, nobody seemed to know, not even Carter.

"I took a turn round the ranch house, to get the sediment out of my thoughts, which were mighty muddled up. Seeing the veranda, where the Sunday-school had been conducted, cleared them a little. From teaching the 'Pache, Mrs. Carter had lately begun to let him teach her—her and the kid; and he did have a whole lot of information of a queer and curious kind hid behind those snaky eyes. He was acquainted with the habits of nigh about every living thing that ever walked or flew or crawled; and as for foretelling the weather, there was never any almanac maker could play tag with the elements in the way that he could. He could see like a spy-glass, hear like a bird, and smell out a trail like a dog; that is, when he was sober, and he was sober all the time now, which I thought was queer.

"So, thinking it out, I was soon nigh about dead certain that Mrs. Carter and the kid were out with the 'Pache somewhere, talking bird lingo with him and studying out such important questions as, 'What makes the moss grow on a tree, instead of the tree growing on the moss?' Such things are very deep and momentous, I don't doubt, but I never heard yet that they affected the prices in the cattle market, and that is the only question of everlasting importance on a cattle ranch.

"Now, the 'Pache, along with his other qualities, seemed to be a sort of wireless telegraph station.

Whether the movements of the birds told him, or whether he smelt it (a good bloodhound ought to been able to scent a band of reservation Injuns twenty miles away, and the 'Pache's nose beat that of any bloodhound that ever chased Eliza), he always knew what was happening all about. So he must have known of the raid long before the news of it knocked me into a cold flutter up in the Encinita scrub; and knowing it, why did he go bug-hunting round over the rocks like a booming bullbat, taking with him Mrs. Carter and the kid? The whole thing spelt treachery, as I looked at it.

"I had figured this out and was going back to lay my war map before Carter, when I heard a coyote yell from one of our Mexicans. The 'Paches were in sight, working like snakes among the rocks of Dump Mountain, off at the right of the ranch house. They shot at the Mexican as he jumped for the nearest bunk rooms. Then I looked on a sight that put a crimp in my midriff. I saw 'Pache Joe snatch little Tad Carter up from some high grass, where the two of them had been lying down, and throwing the kid across a cayuse that was there, he rode off like a whirlwind. At the same minute Mrs. Carter, who hadn't been with Tad at all, came running to the house from the bunch of cottonwoods by the river, where she'd been reading a book.

"Well, when I sized up the fact that she'd been mooning over poetry, and letting the kid wander round by his little lonesome with that snake-eyed San Carlos, I simply cussed till I could feel the soles of my boots scorching; I cussed poets and poetry, books and bookery, Sunday-schools and psalm singing, and everything connected. I was that jacked up I

wonder I drew the line at the Bible, but I did.

"'Injun Joe has run off with the kid!' howls Bill Taylor.

"I could have shot Bill then, and felt good over it; for when he says that, and she heard the rifles barking over on Dump Mountain, and an Injun yell lift in that awful way you've heard 'em, as if the lid of perdition had been twisted off suddenly and the howling of all the sizzling fiends was flung up in a bunch at the sky, she turned as white as a sheet of writing paper and fell limp to the ground.

"I was already bursting with the cuss words I was trying to hold in, and when I seen that I piled 'em out hot onto the head of the fool that frightened her.

"Then, seeing that Carter was running to the help of his wife, I told Bill to jump for a horse and come with me; that it was up to us to see that the Injun didn't get away with the kid; and that if the 'Pache did hurt him, I'd bring back his scalp for it, if I had to follow him to the world's hopping-off place.

"I reckon seeing what he had done scared Bill, for I never knew a man to fling the trappings onto a horse more nimble; and before Carter had got his wife into the house Bill was riding hot from the corral with me. It wasn't wise for any more of the men to go; they were needed to defend the ranch house; and besides we couldn't be sure we'd ever get back, and two was as good as a dozen, if we were booked to be wiped out.

"It was my notion that 'Pache Joe would twist a half circle and wind up by leading us slap into the hands of his friends from the reservation, if he could; I told Bill so, and we looked out sharp as we rode on.

"'If I get my rope round his

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"Bill had his gun out, and I pulled mine." See pag: 464

neck,' says Bill, 'I'll drag him back to the house at the heels of my broncho!'

"I'll kick him so that his spine will stick up through the top of his hat like a flagstaff," I says, thinking to lighten the thing, for Bill was taking it harder than I expected.

"We put the bud to our bronchos wicked, and purty soon we saw 'Pache Joe, as we topped a rise. But he sunk down out of sight at the same minute in a ravine, and by a dodge and a short cut gained more than a mile on us before we knew it. He hadn't turned toward Dump Mountain, and I'm free to admit that his actions began to puzzle us some; but we were that busy trying to get near enough to him to claw our fingers over his steam-pipe that we didn't have time to set down and figure out just what it meant."

The foreman flung the tiny end of his burned-out cigarette into the wood-box by the stove.

"There are two kinds of fools, just as there are two kinds of almost everything. One thinks he knows it all, right straight off the reel, without investigating; the other kind investigates, and sees signs, and imagines he's thinking when he is only just toying a little with the gray matter of his brain. I don't know which is the worst. Both would be standing marks for the fool-killer, if he was only wise to his business; which generally he ain't, or there wouldn't be so many men going round with ring-bone and heaves crippling up their understanding."

Just what he was throwing rocks at we didn't know, and we kept still, for he could be painfully personal upon occasion.

"We were well over to the Rose of Sharon divide, before we had taken enough loops in the distance

to put us close alongside that Injun again. Bill had his gun out, and I pulled mine, and we both let drive together, shooting high to miss the kid. One or the other of us fetched home, for the 'Pache lurched and come nigh tumbling from his cayuse; but he hung on, and taking advantage of a bit of broken ground covered with giant sage he got away again.

"The next time we focussed him was a mile beyond, and he was riding for Old Hugo's cabin, tight as he could drive, still holding the kid in front of him. We saw him slide to the ground there, fall, then climb up and lug the kid into the house. Old Hugo came to the door, looked out, and then dodged back again; and that was a queer thing, as it struck me at the time.

"We didn't waste any wealth of time in getting there. We flew. When we rushed into the cabin, guns in our hands, 'Pache Joe was laying on the floor, coughing blood, for he was shot through the lungs, and Old Hugo was down on his knees bending over the kid. That last froze me stiff, for it made me think one of our bullets had got in its work on little Tad."

Gleason stopped, and drew a long breath.

"Well," he said at last, and he said it kind of queer, as if he wished he could cut out what was still to come, "we had simply been both them kind of fools I was telling you about—we had jumped to conclusions, and we had also read the signs all wrong.

"But what can you expect? If a woman will make a fool of herself and do things that no one else would ever think of doing, and if an Injun will act queer and against his nature and training, who is to know in advance what the upshot of it all

will be? That's the way I look at it; and that's the way Bill looked at it, and he was a sensible sort of chap—sensible enough to get elected sheriff of San Juan county two years afterward!

"Anyhow, a rattlesnake sunning itself on the rocks had struck the kid in the ankle. It was done just about the time the 'Paches wriggled into view over on Dump Mountain. Injun Joe tried to suck the poison out; but fearing he hadn't done it well, and knowing that no time was to be wasted if the kid's life was saved, he straddled the cayuse, with the kid held in front of him, and footed it hot for Old Hugo's. He was figuring that the men on the ranch could take care of themselves; and Old Hugo, as everybody knew, even the Injuns, was the best doctor for rattlesnake bite in the Territory.

"Not getting good views of us, and being too much hurried to investigate, Injun Joe thought we were hostiles, and he didn't know any better until we blundered into the cabin after him, with our pistols. Even then I don't know that he rightly understood; for he had his ticket.

"Old Hugo realized as soon as he saw the 'Pache that medicines nor anything else couldn't do him any good, so he let him pile down on the floor, and gave his attention to the kid and the snake bite. Seeing, as we rode up, that we were white men

and cowboys, he hadn't barred the door against us. 'Twould have taken time to do it, and for concentrated value, diamonds as big as walnuts wouldn't have cut any ice alongside of time just then, with the condition the kid was in. But Old Hugo brought him out of it, for he understood his business—he hadn't got his reputation without earning it. Not many men do, I've noticed.

"We took them both back to the ranch—'Pache Joe dead, and the kid lame, but safe enough now from the effects of the snake bite. The hostiles were gone—them that could get away!—and Mrs. Carter was raving, tearing distracted, with cowboys scattering out to pick up our trail and learn what had happened.

"And that's all," he said. "Only, as I stated in the beginning, when it comes to women and Injuns there's no understanding either of them!"

"Still," his voice dropped a little, "well, I don't know whose bullet it was hit him, mine or Bill's, and I reckon I wouldn't camp on the trail of that piece of information if I could; might have been mine, you know!"

"There's one lesson, though, that I got out of it; it contains a whole heap of others, likely, if a man will look close enough for 'em. My lesson was—Don't be one of the cock-sure fools that won't read the signs that are trying to hit you in the face as you pass along."

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## A PERSONAL PAGE BY THE PUBLISHERS

It is not commonly the good fortune of those who plan and promote new business undertakings, to discover that their most sanguine expectations have been too conservative. It is a human failing to build air castles and see rainbow-tinted visions.

When THE RED Book CORPORATION was created its organizers recognized this common human inclination, even while they cherished hopes of a noteworthy achievement in magazine making.

The plain truth is that THE RED Book has grown faster in circulation than had been counted on by any one, with the result that the facilities prepared for its issuance have been taxed beyond reason. There is a prevalent opinion that magazine-making means but to turn over to the printers a certain number of pages of manuscript, and that at the proper time the edition will be delivered to the publishers in any quantity desired. Even those who recognize the difficulties and complications in getting together a sufficient quantity of the right sort of reading matter, illustrating it properly by the work of the best artists, reproducing the illustrations by the various processes of engraving, obtaining cover designs of artistic beauty and variety, securing striking portraits for the introductory feature month by month, proving to advertisers the merit of the medium placed at their disposal and thereby obtaining their patronage, and some others of the multitude of commercial and editorial factors involved, usually fail utterly to appreciate the mechanical difficulties and limitations to be met in the task of making the printed book. Printing presses must run day and night the month around to turn out RED BOOKS on time. Folding,

stitching and covering machines in the bindery must deliver 15,000 complete copies daily during the one-third of the month devoted to shipment, in order that distribution shall be simultaneous through the United States.

The publishers, printers and binders finally had to recognize that monthly circulation leaps of 25,000 copies were serious matters to accomplish, and that broad enlargement of the mechanical facilities must be made in order to provide for the immediate future and the enormous growth that apparently is to continue without interruption. To make these enlargements in the wisest fashion by introducing the most modern appliances used anywhere by publications of the largest circulation, was manifestly the only thing to do. Therefore the ten-day inspection trip to New York by C. B. Stearns of the firm of Stearns Bros. & Co., THE RED Book printers, and Charles W. Rankin, of Brock & Rankin, THE RED Book binders.

As a result of this journey, and to care for the growth of THE RED Book, machinery and equipment are to be installed at once which will multiply the capacity for the output of the magazine, and enable its editions to be turned out without danger of delay, at the highest rate of speed. An enlarged plant of printing presses, folding machines, covering machines and other appliances especially built for RED Book necessities, must be added to the already large equipment of these well known establishments, and RED Book readers and RED Book advertisers will hereafter be even better served in the promptness with which the magazine is issued, and the excellence of the publication itself.

## THE MAGAZINE THAT'S MADE A RECORD